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Final Independent Evaluation of the ILO E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province in South Africa Project

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Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	vii
1. PROJECT BACKGROUND	1
2. EVALUATION BACKGROUND.....	2
3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS	4
3.1 Revised Evaluation Questions	4
4. METHODOLOGY.....	5
5. FINDINGS.....	9
5.1. Relevance.....	9
5.2. Coherence.....	10
5.3. Effectiveness.....	12
5.4. Efficiency	16
5.5. Impact Orientation	17
5.6. Sustainability	19
5.7. Cross-Cutting Issues	21
6. CONCLUSIONS	23
7. LESSONS LEARNT AND GOOD PRACTICES	24
Lessons Learned	24
Best Practices	25
8. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	26
9. APPENDICES	28
10. BIBLIOGRAPHY	57

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Consolidated Evaluation Questions	4
Table 2. Key Informant Interviews Conducted	6
Table 3. Summary of Sustainability Drivers	21

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Project Logical Framework.....	2
Figure 2. Phased Evaluation Process	4
Figure 3. Operational and in-establishment phase businesses	14
Figure 4. ILO e-waste expenditure summary. source: Interview with project finance officer	16

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Description

The International Labour Organization (ILO) E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project was a one-year pilot designed to address the dual challenges of high youth unemployment and unsustainable e-waste management. Its theory of change posited that by equipping young people with technical skills in safe dismantling and grading, entrepreneurship training, workspaces (containers), tools, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and market linkages, they would establish viable green micro-enterprises. This would divert e-waste from landfills, create decent jobs, raise awareness, and strengthen local institutional capacity. The project operated across 22 municipalities in Limpopo, supporting 22 youth beneficiaries (1 beneficiary per local Municipality) through a collaborative management structure involving ILO (Pretoria and HQ), Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Environment (DFFE), Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), E-Waste Association South Africa (EWASA), municipalities, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. The project closed on 31 March 2026. By the time of the final beneficiary survey (March 2026), 52% (12) of the supported enterprises were operational and 48% (10) were in the establishment phase. Beneficiaries had created 58 new jobs and collectively employed 165 people. Significant progress was recorded in skills development, business registration (76%), and municipal relationships established, although many enterprises still faced licensing, transport, storage, and working capital challenges.

Evaluation Objectives & Methodology

This final independent evaluation was conducted to assess the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. It examined the full implementation period (April 2025 – March 2026) with a geographic focus on Limpopo Province and strong attention to gender equality, social dialogue, and environmental sustainability. Primary users include the ILO, the Government of Japan, South African government partners (DFFE, LEDET, municipalities), EWASA, TVET colleges, and other stakeholders involved in green jobs and circular economy programming. The evaluation employed a mixed-methods, participatory approach including extensive desk review, 28 key informant interviews from a wide cross section of project stakeholders, analysis of three waves of beneficiary surveys, and a community awareness survey. Data were triangulated and analysed against OECD/DAC criteria and ILO cross-cutting themes.

Evaluation Findings

Relevance

The project demonstrated high relevance, with strongly positive stakeholder sentiment (95%). However small in its scale, it addressed Limpopo Province's pressing dual challenges of high youth unemployment and unsustainable e-waste management by providing young people with technical skills in safe dismantling, entrepreneurship training, workspaces, tools, PPE, and market linkages. The project design aligned closely with national priorities, including Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations and the National Waste Management Strategy, as well as the UNSDCF and SDGs 5, 8, and 12. Stakeholders confirmed that it responded directly to real needs on the ground, with the project showing adaptability by slightly shifting some focus toward operational support.

Coherence

The project also performed strongly on coherence (85% positive sentiment). It complemented rather than duplicated existing initiatives by working through established structures involving LEDET, municipalities, EWASA, and TVET colleges. The Project Steering Committee served as an effective coordination platform, while partnerships enhanced synergies across policy frameworks. Alignment with national policies and the study tour to Japan further strengthened systemic coherence and potential for broader impact.

Effectiveness

On effectiveness, results were positive to mixed (75% positive). The project successfully trained 22 youth beneficiaries and supported enterprise initiation. By project closure, 52% of the supported enterprises were operational and 48% were in the establishment phase, with 76% achieving CIPC registration. Collectively, these businesses created 58 new jobs and employed 165 people in total. Community awareness also improved significantly, reaching 64% of surveyed respondents with an average knowledge gain of 8.56 out

of 10. However, full income generation and licensing remained constrained by the short project timeframe and regulatory barriers.

Efficiency

Efficiency was assessed as mixed but leaning positive (65 -70%). Despite a modest USD 1.5 million budget and a compressed one-year implementation period, the project delivered good value for money through a lean team, strong stakeholder leveraging, and a high expenditure rate of 95%. Comprehensive support packages combining skills development and infrastructure were provided efficiently, though the tight timeline resulted in some rushed processes and delays in equipment delivery and licensing.

Impact & Sustainability

The project showed promising impact orientation (80% positive). At the individual level, beneficiaries experienced clear gains in technical and business skills, confidence, entrepreneurial agency, and empowerment, particularly for women participants. Institutionally, emerging impacts included greater integration of e-waste into municipal waste management planning, progress on TVET curriculum development, and strengthened relationships with local authorities. Broader environmental and policy-level changes remained prospective but indicated strong potential.

Sustainability was rated positively (80%). Key drivers included the retention of technical and business skills as permanent assets, ownership of containers by municipality rather than by individual, the formation of cooperatives, increasing municipal ownership, TVET integration, and complementary funding from EWASA. While local ownership and partnerships provided a solid foundation, risks persisted around licensing delays, infrastructure gaps, and working capital.

Cross-cutting Issues

Cross-cutting issues were addressed strongly (90% positive sentiment). Gender mainstreaming was effective, achieving approximately 45% female participation in a traditionally male-dominated sector, with women beneficiaries reporting safe environments and high confidence levels. Social dialogue was advanced through the tripartite-plus Project Steering Committee and cooperative structures, while environmental sustainability remained central to the intervention.

Though the project was implemented relatively successfully in a constrained environment, the evaluation picked up a number of lessons and best practices. An important one was a one-year project cycle is too short for meaningful enterprise development in the regulated e-waste sector, with a minimum of two to three years recommended for better consolidation of results and to avoid rushed processes. Secondly, infrastructure and working capital gaps limit the translation of training into viable businesses, while regulatory licensing processes (particularly SAPS and hazardous waste handling and transportation permits) represent major bottlenecks in this type of work in South Africa. These must be considered when deciding the type of project and support. Thirdly, it was clear that differentiated support package is also because beneficiary pool is mostly heterogeneous. Notable best practices were the strategic placement of collection containers close to communities, deliberate gender targeting combined with women-led cooperative formation, and the holistic training model that integrated technical skills, business development (SIYB/GYB), and direct industry exposure. These approaches drove strong individual transformation and local ownership.

Lessons Learned & Good Practices

Lessons Learned

1. One-year project duration is too short for meaningful enterprise development in the e-waste sector. A longer time frame (minimum of 2-3 years) is required for consolidation and sustainable outcomes.
2. Infrastructure and working capital gaps severely limit the translation of training into viable businesses.
3. Regulatory compliance processes, particularly the SAPS Second-Hand Goods Licence and Waste Management & Transport Licences for hazardous waste, are major bottlenecks that must be addressed during project implementation.
4. Differentiated support is required for a heterogeneous beneficiary cohort (novices vs. those with prior experience, varying locations and economic situations).

5. Strong municipal and institutional relationships are foundational for sustainability, but they must be translated into concrete operational commitments and formalised handover mechanisms.

Good Practices

1. Strategic placement of collection containers combined with community awareness campaigns: Positioning containers in high-access locations (e.g., near taxi ranks and residential areas) significantly improved collection efficiency and community participation.
2. Deliberate gender mainstreaming through targeted beneficiary selection (aiming for 60% women) and the formation of a cooperative. This helped pioneer women's participation in a traditionally male-dominated sector and enabled collective solutions to challenges like transport costs.
3. Holistic training model integrating technical skills (safe dismantling, sorting, and grading), business development training (SIYB/GYB), and direct industry exposure through facility visits. This practical, comprehensive approach led to strong skills acquisition and high technical confidence among beneficiaries.

Evaluation Recommendations

The evaluation recommends several strategic actions to build on the project's promising foundation and ensure lasting impact:

- ▶ **First**, an immediate six-month transition support package should be implemented by the ILO Country Office, LEDET, EWASA, DFFE, and municipalities. This package should focus on accelerating licensing processes (particularly SAPS Second-Hand Goods and hazardous waste handling permits), completing infrastructure delivery, facilitating cooperative aggregation for shared transport and storage, and providing targeted working capital or credit linkages to help beneficiaries fully operationalise their enterprises.
- ▶ **Second**, resource mobilisation efforts should be intensified to support a differentiated scale-up programme over the medium term (12–24 months). Drawing on the success of this pilot, a larger follow-on initiative is warranted across Limpopo and potentially other provinces. This scale-up should adopt a longer timeframe of at least two to three years, offer tailored support according to enterprise maturity levels (novice versus more established), strengthen integration with TVET systems, and include formal financing mechanisms for youth-led e-waste businesses.
- ▶ **Third**, future programming should strengthen gender-transformative approaches by moving beyond numerical representation to address underlying norms, power dynamics, and barriers. This includes conducting proper gender analysis during design, embedding GBV prevention, providing childcare considerations, ensuring safe and accessible business locations, and setting realistic yet meaningful equity targets supported by strong enabling measures.
- ▶ **Fourth**, continued technical support is needed to mainstream e-waste management into municipal policy and planning. LEDET, DFFE, municipalities, and the ILO should work together to fully integrate e-waste into Integrated Waste Management Plans (IWMPs), local bylaws, and performance management systems, including dedicated budget lines and awareness targets for the 2026–2027 period and beyond.
- ▶ **Finally**, partnerships with the different key partners especially TVET colleges and municipalities should be formalised and strengthened to ensure a sustainable supply of skilled youth and continuity in municipal led e-waste management. This involves rolling out accredited short courses on e-waste recycling and establishing the colleges as ongoing incubation hubs for new cohorts of green entrepreneurs.



Photo credit: Youth working on e-waste items.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DWT	Decent Work Team
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EWASA	e-Waste Association of South Africa
GYB	Generate Your Business
ILO	International Labour Organization
IWMP	Integrated Waste Management Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
LEDET	Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDP	National Development Plan
NEMWA	National Environmental Management: Waste Act
OHS / OSH	Occupational Health and Safety
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRO	Producer Responsibility Organisation
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
SAPS	South African Police Service
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WEEE	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

South Africa, classified as an upper-middle-income economy (Government of South Africa, 2025), faces profound challenges in e-waste management amid rapid urbanisation, technological proliferation, and persistent socioeconomic inequalities rooted in its past (Bansal et al., 2022). Since the democratic transition in 1994, the country has implemented progressive environmental policies, such as the National Environmental Management Waste Act (NEMWA) of 2008 (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2024), which mandates Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and prohibits landfill disposal of e-waste (DFFE, 2024). However, enforcement remains uneven due to limited infrastructure and informality prevalent in e-waste management (Mkhwanazi, 2023). Data indicates that the country generates 415.5 kilotons of e-waste annually, primarily from consumer electronics, with formal recycling rates below 10% (University of Johannesburg, 2023). This is said to exacerbate pollution from hazardous substances like lead and mercury that contaminates the soil and water sources (University of Johannesburg, 2023). Such an environmental challenge co-exists with an equally lethal economic challenge - youth unemployment. Youth unemployment exceeds 40% (Statistics South Africa, 2025), particularly in rural provinces like Limpopo, where social and cultural norms favour informal waste picking as a survival strategy, compounded by historical mining legacies that have desensitised communities to environmental degradation (Govender et al., 2020). In Limpopo specifically, household surveys reveal low awareness, with only 28% recognising e-waste hazards (Uhunamure et al., 2021). This leads to widespread unsafe storage, open dumping or burning, posing severe health risks in a poverty-burdened, agriculture-dependent region (Uhunamure et al., 2021; Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2021).

These national and provincial vulnerabilities highlighted the need for targeted interventions, such as the International Labour Organization's (ILO) E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project, that was implemented between April 2025 to March 2026. This one-year initiative, funded by the Government of Japan, sought to tackle youth joblessness and environmental degradation, through sustainable e-waste management in a circular economy framework (LEDET, 2025). Its theory of change asserts that providing marginalised youth with technical recycling skills, entrepreneurial training, business support, and market linkages, will spawn youth-led enterprises, formalise informal practices, bolster policy enforcement, and create decent green jobs - aligning with South Africa's National Development Plan 2030, and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on decent work and responsible consumption (LEDET, 2025). The logic progresses from awareness-raising and capacity-building, to enterprise setup and policy advocacy. Primary interventions included hands-on training in safe dismantling/recycling, startup incubation, and stakeholder forums for impact scaling. Key milestones comprised selecting 22 youths, prioritising 60% women and persons with disabilities, providing training, enterprise launches, and handover to provincial ownership in March 2026 (ILO, 2025). This project complemented an earlier ILO led UNPAGE project on circular economy.

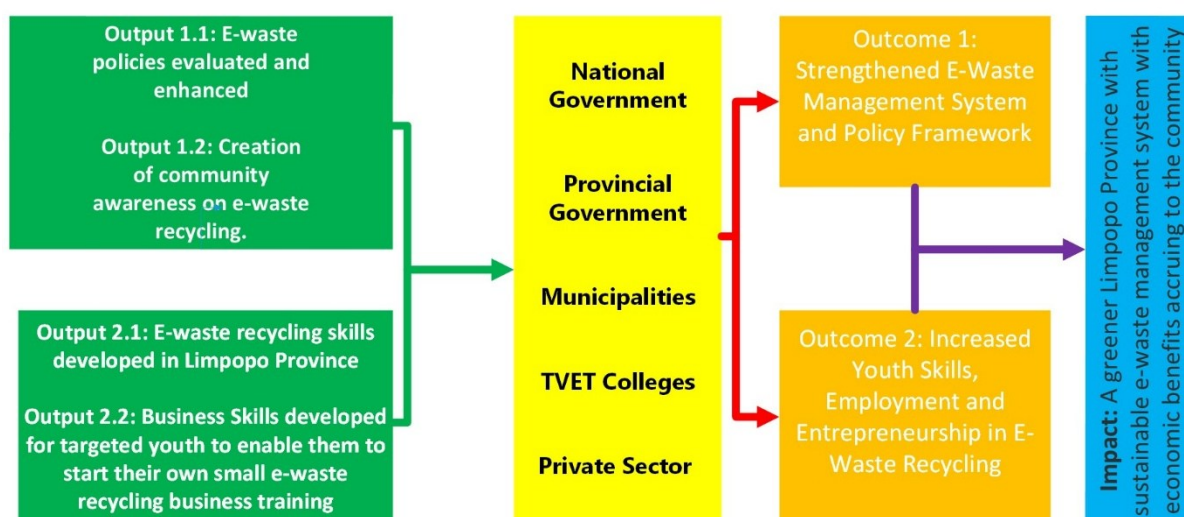
Geographically, the project covered all 22 local municipalities in Limpopo (ILO, 2025), ensuring inclusive reach from the urban provincial capital of Polokwane, to remote rural areas often plagued by poor collection systems (LEDET, 2025). According to the main project document, management was collaborative. ILO led implementation with green jobs expertise; LEDET handled provincial coordination and engagement, while DFFE offered regulatory oversight and EPR ties (LEDET, 2025). Funding came from the Japanese bilateral aid via ILO. As of April 2026, the project had closed having trained participants, helped establish 22 youth enterprises, and created awareness on e-waste and the e-waste (EPR) policy in Limpopo. Despite scale challenges, policy enhancements (e.g., EPR expansions) and community involvement have yielded positive signs in the interim, including less informal dumping and jobs created (UN South Africa, 2026). This status adapts to Limpopo's infrastructure limits, priming for replication (Moyo-Masa, 2023).

The project was designed with two outcome pillars. The first primary outcome was the **strengthening of the e-waste management system and policy framework**. To achieve this, the project aimed at delivering outputs that included the evaluation and enhancement of existing e-waste policies, and, the creation of widespread community awareness, regarding the policies, and on the benefits of e-waste recycling as a business enterprise. Major activities associated with this outcome at the design stage of the project included, a comprehensive study of the provincial regulatory framework, and the assessment of barriers to adopting a circular economy model. The project also assessed the potential for public-private partnerships, developed a standard business plan for e-waste recycling, and conducted strategic environmental impact assessments. It also established Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) guidelines specifically for e-waste recycling, and implemented extensive outreach campaigns, to engage community leaders and social partners.

The second significant outcome focused on **increasing youth skills, employment, and entrepreneurship** within the sector. This was supported by outputs that developed technical recycling skills, and business expertise for targeted youth beneficiaries. Key activities included a training needs assessment, and the implementation of a training-of-trainers (ToT) model, to equip a select team of TVET college lecturers. Youth participants were to receive hands-on technical training in safe e-waste dismantling and processing, supported by the development of a model e-waste recycling TVET curriculum. Additionally, the project planned to utilize the ILO's *"Start and Improve Your Business"* (SIYB) programme to provide entrepreneurship training. This was coupled with ongoing business development support, such as mentorship, assistance with company registrations, and the facilitation of access to finance and market linkages with public and private investment.

By fostering market linkages and supporting youth-led enterprises, the initiative, though at a limited scale, does directly link with **SDGs 8 and 12, promoting decent work and responsible consumption patterns**. Below is summary representation of the projects results logic, indicating major outputs the project sought to deliver, the core stakeholders pivotal for implementation delivery and, the results (outcomes and impact) it sought to influence.

Figure 1. Project Logical Framework



Stakeholder roles were clearly delineated. The ILO drove the decent work principles, and managed the project resources. LEDET and DFFE supplied policy, facilitation, and monitoring. The Japanese funders ensured financial viability, while municipalities, institutions, Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs), and NGOs delivered logistics, linkages, and mobilisation for a scalable ecosystem.

2. EVALUATION BACKGROUND

This final independent evaluation of the ILO E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project, was commissioned as per ILO policy on evaluation, which mandates a final independent evaluation of all Development Cooperation projects with a budget of more than one million USD. The evaluation was conducted to serve multiple purposes. It provided accountability to the donor, the ILO, and national partners by objectively documenting the project's performance against its planned objectives. It also supported project improvement by identifying strengths, weaknesses, and underlying factors that influenced results, and it contributed to organizational learning within the ILO on green jobs, circular economy approaches, youth entrepreneurship in rural settings, and the integration of environmental sustainability, with decent work principles.

Evaluation Objectives

Broadly, the primary purpose of the evaluation was to undertake a summative assessment of the extent to which the project delivered (as per results framework), and analyse how well that delivery was achieved, the factors that enabled or hindered delivery, and generate lessons that can be applied to future similar projects. The evaluation also sought to confirm the relevance of the project at its inception and how that

relevance evolved throughout the project life. The evaluation's terms of reference, listed the following specific objectives of the evaluation.

1. Assess the relevance of the project's design and implementation strategies in relation to the relevant ILO, UN, and national development frameworks (i.e. SDGs and UNSDCF) of South Africa and final beneficiaries' needs.
2. Review and substantiate emerging evidence related to the achievements of the project's goals and its contribution to the environmental sustainability and enterprises development.
3. Assess the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives and expected results, while identifying the supporting factors and constraints that have led to them, including strategies and implementation modalities chosen, partnership and coordination arrangements.
4. Identify unexpected positive and negative results of the Project.
5. Assess the level of implementation efficiency of the intervention.
6. Assess the extent to which the project's outcomes and observed impacts will be sustainable in the respective geographical coverage.
7. Identify lessons learnt and emerging good practices for the key stakeholders, including ILO in Africa, to guide its efforts in supporting E-Waste management.
8. Provide strategic recommendations for the Project Team, the ILO, the Project Partners, the Donor, and different key stakeholders to promote sustainability and support further development, as well as to inform the design of future similar interventions of the ILO in support to environmental sustainability and job creation.

Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation covered the full implementation period of the project, from its official start in April 2025 to its closure in March 2026. It examined all outputs, outcomes, and objectives as defined in the project document and logical framework. Geographically, the evaluation focused on Limpopo Province in South Africa, encompassing the selected municipalities and implementation sites. Particular attention was given to cross-cutting themes, including gender equality and non-discrimination, the inclusion of persons with disabilities, social dialogue and tripartism. The assessment also considered the immediate to potentially long-term effects, of support interventions targeting youth beneficiaries, TVET colleges, municipalities, and national institutions.

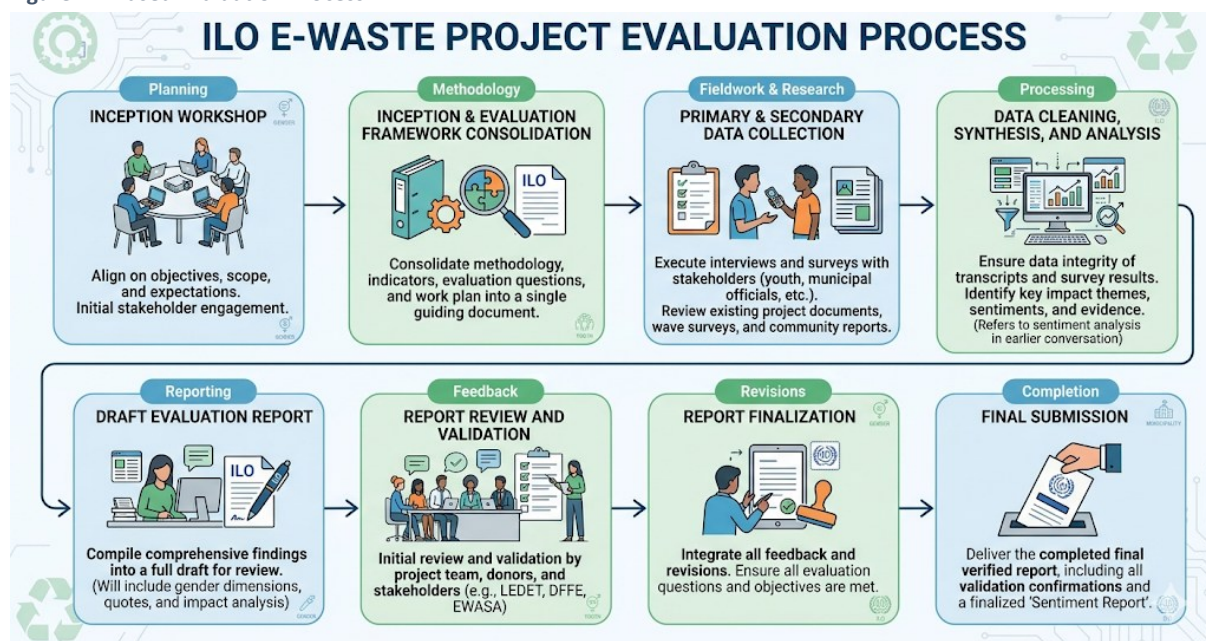
Evaluation Users

The primary clients and users of the evaluation included the ILO (Pretoria Country Office, Decent Work Team, Regional Office for Africa, and headquarters), the Government of Japan as the donor, and South African government partners at national (DFFE), provincial (LEDET), and municipal levels. Other key users were the EWASA, TVET institutions, youth beneficiaries and their cooperative, as well as workers' and employers' organizations as with growth supported entrepreneurs will soon enough transition into employer-employee relationships. The findings were also intended to inform future ILO programming on e-waste management, green skills development, and youth employment in the region.

Evaluation Process

The evaluation began in mid-March 2026 with an inception meeting, following the signing of the consultancy contract. The meeting was attended by the appointed Evaluation Manager, project staff, ILO Regional M&E Officer and the Evaluator. This was followed by a desk review of project documents and literature, which led to the submission and approval of the Inception Report by the end of March 2026. Data collection took place from late March 2026 to early May 2026 through a mixed-methods approach that included interviews with stakeholders, beneficiaries, and partners, as well as analysis of available quantitative monitoring data and online survey. Feedback to the draft report was then collected from ILO and key stakeholders. The draft evaluation report was submitted in mid-May 2026, with consolidated stakeholder comments incorporated. The final report, following ILO quality assurance processes including reviews by the Regional M&E Specialist was completed towards the end of May 2026. The entire exercise was conducted over approximately 23 working days spread between 14th March and 31st May 2026. The evaluation was carried out through a phased approach running from planning/inception stage to final reporting as depicted in the figure below

Figure 2. Phased Evaluation Process



3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation was framed around the standard OECD/DAC criteria - *Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability* - supplemented by ILO-specific focus on cross-cutting issues, particularly gender equality and non-discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue, environmental sustainability, and capacity development. This framework was adopted as outlined in the Inception Report to ensure a comprehensive, balanced, and ILO-normative assessment of the project. As proposed in the Inception Report, the original 34 evaluation questions contained in the Terms of Reference were consolidated during the inception phase into a more manageable and focused set of 18 questions. This consolidation eliminated redundancies while preserving all essential areas of enquiry. The revised questions were organised under the main criteria and served as high-level prompts to guide data collection and analysis. The process of consolidation and the resulting questions were explicitly documented in the Inception Report (Section 5.1) and adhered to throughout the evaluation. This streamlined set of questions enabled deeper exploration while maintaining full coverage of the original TOR requirements.

3.1 Revised Evaluation Questions

The table below summarises the consolidation process as committed in the Inception Report.

Table 1. Consolidated Evaluation Questions

Criteria	Consolidated Evaluation Questions
Relevance & Strategic Fit	1. To what extent is the project aligned with stakeholder needs, national/regional priorities, UNSDCF, SDGs, and the socioeconomic realities of South Africa? 2. Does its design reflect a logical and purposeful approach?
Coherence	3. How well does the project complement other frameworks/partnerships/initiatives (ILO, donor-supported, national, regional, international) to ensure coherence? 4. To what extent has the project been designed to maximise systemic and sustainable changes at national and regional levels?
Effectiveness	5. To what extent has the project achieved its intended objectives, particularly in addressing youth unemployment, environmental management, and equitable outcomes for beneficiaries?

	6. What key factors, challenges and Theory of Change constructs have influenced achievement of expected outcomes?
	7. What unexpected results, both positive and negative, have emerged from the project?
Efficiency	8. How efficiently have technical, financial, and human resources been allocated, utilised, and delivered?
	9. Could similar results have been achieved with fewer resources or alternative approaches?
	10. To what extent did the project integrate gendered/inclusive planning, budgeting, risk management, and M&E systems?
Impact Orientation	11. How has the project contributed to long-term improvements for beneficiaries, policy/practice changes, and broader development goals?
	12. What evidence exists of strengthened institutions and governance systems, and what lessons can inform future ILO e-waste projects to maximise impact?
Sustainability	13. To what extent has the project built local ownership, institutional capacity, and prepared national partners to sustain outcomes beyond ILO support?
	14. What are the main risks to sustainability, and how have they been mitigated through exit strategies?
	15. What is the probability that beneficiaries will continue to experience improved employment and enterprise development support after ILO support ends?
Cross-Cutting Issues	16. To what extent did the project mainstream gender equality and non-discrimination principles into its design and implementation?
	17. How effectively did the project promote strong worker/employer organisations and facilitate social dialogue?
	18. How well was environmental sustainability enhanced through this project?

A detailed Evaluation Question Matrix (EQM) was developed to link each consolidated question to specific measures/indicators, data sources, collection methods, and stakeholders. The EQM served as the operational backbone of the evaluation, ensuring systematic and transparent enquiry. The EQM is annexed at the end of this report. Gender equality and non-discrimination as well as the tripartite approach were integrated as cross-cutting area of analysis in data collection and analysis, consistent with ILO guidance. This framework ensured that the evaluation remained faithful to nuance and evidence-basis in ascertaining the project's contribution to decent work, green economy transition, and inclusive youth employment in Limpopo Province.

4. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach, with a stronger emphasis on qualitative research to generate depth of insight and explanation beyond purely statistical quantification. This design was particularly well-suited to a summative assessment of a short-duration, complex intervention operating in a dynamic provincial context. The methodology combined contribution analysis principles with systematic performance assessment against the OECD/DAC criteria and the 18 consolidated evaluation questions. Each of the data collection methods used in this evaluation are discussed, next.

4.1 Desk Review

The evaluation began with a systematic desk review of all relevant project documentation. This included the Project Document, results framework (logframe) and indicator progress tracking data, periodic progress narrative reports, Project Steering Committee (PSC) minutes, the three waves of beneficiary follow-up surveys, with the final wave conducted in March 2026 when the evaluation was starting. Others included Means of Verification compilation done by the project, stories of change documentation, relevant national and provincial policy documents (EPR regulations, National Waste Management Strategy, Limpopo IWMPs, among others. ILO guidance notes on conducting and reporting evaluations and other external literature on e-waste in South Africa were also reviewed. The desk review established a baseline context, triangulated quantitative achievements, and identified evidence gaps that were subsequently addressed through primary data collection. Project monitoring data and beneficiary survey reports proved particularly valuable

for assessing the project's delivery, some of which was verified through key informant interviews as part of data triangulation.

4.2 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Semi-structured key informant interviews formed a core component of primary data collection. A total of **28 interviews (18 male, 10 Female)** were successfully completed with representatives of eight (**8**) different stakeholder entities sampled from the project documents. The 28 achieved, exceeded the original target of 22 as a data collection extension granted by ILO, allowed for more interviews to be conducted. All interviews were conducted virtually (via Teams, Zoom, or WhatsApp) with informed consent and were recorded and transcribed for analysis where permission was acquired. The choice for virtual data collection was circumstantial because it started when the project had just closed and the project team had separated from ILO, making logistical support for in-person field data collection less viable. The published TOR had also envisaged virtual data collection as an option. The sampled KIIs were purposively selected to ensure diversity across success levels, gender, geography, and stakeholder type. **Table 2** below summarizes the different stakeholders who were interviewed and provided insight, verification as well as recommendations that are contained in this report.

Table 2. Key Informant Interviews Conducted

Stakeholder Entity	Target	Achieved	% of Women ¹
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (national)	1	1	100%
Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET)-provincial	2	3	0%
Representatives of district and local municipalities	4	3	67%
E-Waste Association of South Africa (EWASA)	1	2	50%
Project beneficiaries (mix of successful, moderately successful, and emerging)	6	10	30%
ILO staff working on the project	3	3	33%
ILO specialists (Employment Intensive Investment, Skills, Enterprise Development)	2	3	33%
TVET colleges	2	2	0%
Project donor (Japanese Embassy in South Africa)	1	1	100%
Total	22	28	36%

Interviews explored relevance and coordination measures of the project, changes in knowledge and practices, enabling and constraining factors, institutional impacts, gender dynamics, sustainability prospects, and lessons learnt and best practices.

4.3 Online Survey

A **semi structured** online survey was deployed via Microsoft Forms to broaden stakeholder input and generate quantitative data to assess the community awareness aspect of the project. The survey targeting residents reached through project outreach activities received **51 responses** which was quite low relative to the reported information reach. It assessed knowledge gains, attitude shifts, recall of key messages, and behavioural changes regarding e-waste handling. Most responses were received from Lepelle Nkumpi Local municipality (14%), followed by Lephalale (12%) and Makhuduthamaga (8%). 54% of respondents were male while 44% were female. The 25–34-year-old age range dominated the respondents' pool while a majority of

¹ Final gender representation determined by sampling criteria, incumbents for stated roles and availability during data collection phase.

respondents (36%) had matric level (high school) education, with 26% each reporting to have post matric diploma/certificate and bachelor's degree. The reason for the low response rates was due to limited awareness creation (one-time activities) and connectivity challenges in most rural localities. Though an initial invite was sent to approximately 115 persons, they were requested to forward to others. The link was also reforwarded to community groups, through word of mouth and other means. The actual denominator is therefore not possible to determine for purposes of determining the "response rate", but given that project reports show hundreds of attendees in awareness raising events, and though not all had attendance lists 51 is still relatively unrepresentative and as such results from this survey are used narrowly in this report specifically under effectiveness criteria to give an indicative result of community education effectiveness. This simply gives an indicative snapshot of the state of awareness. This is an aspect that may warrant a further study to collect more representative data over a longer period of time. It is worth noting that the survey was only focusing on one specific activity (awareness creation) and was an attempt to collect some situational data that could possibly inform future design of an awareness intervention by assessing the current state of awareness. The limitation outlined above does not therefore impact the overall evaluation study.

4.4 Data Analysis and Triangulation

Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed systematically and rigorously to ensure credible, triangulated findings. All data sources were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of project performance against the 17 consolidated evaluation questions and OECD/DAC criteria.

- **Quantitative Data Analysis:** Data from the project results framework (results chain Excel), the three waves of beneficiary follow-up surveys (particularly the final March 2026 wave), and the community awareness survey were analysed using descriptive statistics. This included calculations of frequencies, percentages, means, and disaggregation by key variables such as enterprise status (operational vs. in establishment), gender, municipality, and income levels. Visual representations- tables, bar charts, pie charts, and trend graphs - were generated to illustrate progress against targets, employment creation, compliance rates, income trends, and awareness/knowledge gains. Outliers (e.g., two larger enterprises) were identified and analysed both within aggregate figures and as separate sub-groups to avoid distortion of findings for micro-enterprises.
- **Qualitative Data Analysis:** Key informant interview transcripts, open-ended survey responses, and documentary sources were subjected to thematic coding and content analysis. An initial holistic reading provided narrative overview, followed by systematic coding organised around the evaluation criteria, consolidated questions, and the project's Theory of Change. Codes were grouped into themes and sub-themes, with particular attention to enabling/constraining factors, unexpected results, gender dimensions, institutional changes, and sustainability prospects. Direct quotes from beneficiaries, municipal officials, and other stakeholders were selected to illustrate key findings and bring the human dimension of change to life.
- **AI-assisted sentiment analysis:** As an additional analytical aid, AI-assisted sentiment analysis was applied to anonymized interview transcripts and open-ended survey responses. The objective was not to determine evaluation findings or performance ratings, but rather to characterize the overall sentiment expressed by respondents in relation to each OECD/DAC evaluation criterion. To enhance reproducibility, the same anonymized datasets and standardized prompts were analysed independently using both Gemini and Grok. The outputs were compared for consistency in overall sentiment classification and explanatory patterns. Both models produced substantially similar sentiment classifications, with only minor differences in narrative interpretation. Where differences occurred, these were reviewed against the original transcripts by the evaluator, whose judgement remained the final basis for interpretation. This process was undertaken solely as a triangulation mechanism to strengthen consistency of qualitative interpretation rather than replace conventional qualitative analysis. Importantly, evaluation findings, criterion ratings and conclusions were not derived from sentiment analysis alone. They were based on evaluator's synthesis and triangulation of multiple evidence sources, including documentary review, project monitoring data, beneficiary surveys, community survey findings, key informant interviews, and contribution analysis. A stakeholders validation workshop with 24 participants validated the findings. Sentiment analysis therefore served

only as one supplementary input for understanding the overall tone of stakeholder perceptions and not as the cardinal measure of evaluation performance.

4.5 Ethical Considerations and Stakeholder Participation

The evaluation fully adhered to ILO and UNEG ethical standards, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and do-no-harm principles. Consent to participate in the interviews was acquired in advance via email or telephonic requests. Where audio recording was possible, consent to record was sought at the beginning of the interviews. Data was anonymized as much as possible before analysis for sentiment with references to ILO, specific area or persons names removed. In this report therefore, under the findings section, there will be no names or actual titles of the persons who gave inputs, specific views or whose direct quotes of speech are used. Stakeholders were actively engaged throughout, and preliminary findings were shared for validation including presentation in a stakeholders' workshop involving 24 participants. This participatory approach ensured that all key stakeholder entities had a voice in this evaluation and would identify with the findings there-in. This approach provided a robust, credible, and utilisation-focused evidence base for the conclusions and recommendations that follow.

4.6 Limitations

Like in any research activity, a number of weak areas are always possible. Declaring such limitations is key for transparency and to providing the context through which findings should be read. While the evaluation employed a robust mixed-methods design and achieved strong coverage of stakeholders, several limitations inherent to the project and the evaluation context are acknowledged below.

- **Inability to objectively measure medium to long term results:** The project's short 12-month duration (April 2025 - March 2026) significantly constrained the ability to observe medium- and long-term outcomes and impacts. Many beneficiaries had barely started, and the work done under outcome one was relatively sporadic rather than consistently done over a long period of time to entrench the messaging towards behaviour change. The project had just closed. Indeed, the last activities were still being implemented at the early stages of the evaluation. In a nutshell, there weren't much to be observed in terms of outcome level and impact results. An *ex-post* evaluation 6-12 months after this evaluation would potentially be able to pinpoint some change. In this evaluation therefore, change is discussed mostly from a prospective angle, except where pockets of evidence were identified.
- **Limitations associated with self-reporting:** A substantial portion of the data, particularly on income, employment figures, plans by authorities and business performance, relied on self-reported information and thus highly subjective. While this provided valuable first-hand insights, it carries an inherent risk of *optimism bias* or *social desirability*. These biases make respondents to present their progress favourably. It is not always possible to eliminate optimism bias and social desirability, but the evaluator managed this probing and requesting for evidence where strong claims were made.
- **Outliers:** Aggregate quantitative statistics collected as part of routine M&E were sensitive to the presence of two significantly larger and more established enterprises (one employing 88 people and another 13). These outliers inflated overall employment and income averages, potentially masking the more modest realities faced by the majority of the enterprises. Without careful disaggregation and sub-group analysis, there was a risk of overstating project-wide success. The evaluation managed this by conducting independent interviews with 10 sampled beneficiaries which helped to moderate the project arguments that may have projected success, when inherent challenges were present.
- **Evaluation timing:** The evaluation took place immediately around project close-out, which restricted observation of post-project dynamics and the effectiveness of exit/hand-over arrangements. Such criteria as sustainability and impact could only be assessed prospectively through stakeholder perceptions, institutional commitments, and beneficiary confidence levels rather than through longevity observations. Readers should interpret long-term impact and sustainability conclusions with appropriate caution, recognising that this evaluation captures a promising early trajectory rather than definitive long-term outcomes.

5. FINDINGS

The ILO E-Waste for Youth Employment project in Limpopo Province tells a compelling story of turning environmental liability into economic opportunity. Against the backdrop of unmanaged electronic waste piling up in communities, often burned in open air, releasing toxins while the province grapples with stubbornly high youth unemployment, the project identified, trained and supported 22 young entrepreneurs to build legally compliant and, viable e-waste enterprises. At the same time the project worked on upstream aspects of policy, planning and institutional partnerships to entrench attention to e-waste management. Within a period less than a year, it delivered measurable progress in skills, enterprise formation, employment creation and institutional foundations. The findings presented in this chapter are a sum product achieved by synthesizing data from these multiple sources, weaved together and distilled to respond to the main evaluation questions under each criterion. These findings are woven from project routine M&E data and other documentation, beneficiary surveys done just before the evaluation, community data acquired through a community survey, and rich qualitative data from 28 key informant interviews representing all key stakeholders involved in the project.

Findings are organized by evaluation criteria. The overall ratings assigned to each OECD/DAC criterion reflect the evaluator's holistic judgement based on triangulated evidence across all data sources. These ratings considered the extent to which planned outputs and outcomes were achieved, the quality and credibility of supporting evidence, consistency across stakeholder groups, documentary verification, observed implementation progress, contextual constraints, and the project's theory of change. Stakeholder sentiment informed the interpretation of stakeholder perceptions but did not determine the evaluation ratings. The overall sentiment ratings are therefore used to back up the evaluator's assessment of each criterion.

5.1. Relevance

Overall Assessment- Strongly Positive (95%): *The project was viewed as highly relevant to both environmental and socioeconomic gaps in Limpopo. Project listed needs and real needs on the ground, matched.*

In assessing project relevance, it is essential to first identify what the evaluation participants perceive to have been the needs, gaps or problems that needed to be solved, and understand whether there is coherence between what a project claims to have been solving, *vis-à-vis* what those involved/affected understand the problem, need or gap to be. When asked what this project was trying to solve as they understood it, stakeholders consistently highlighted the following as the key gaps/needs that existed before this project was established. Some are long-term needs while others short and medium term and included:

- youth unemployment,
- lack of e-waste awareness/skills,
- unsafe informal practices (burning/dumping), and,
- absence of formal recycling infrastructure

The above needs correspond with the ILO's project design and speak well into the appropriateness of the ILO design. This is the first key finding. The design matched the real needs on the ground. Gaps in the policy and systems space and the accompanying awareness, though identified in official reports as key constraints, was not highlighted to be a key gap by key informants. This may denote overwhelming needs in the practical domain (infrastructure, tools, skilled collectors etc) rather than in strategic aspects (policy, regulations, plans etc). Though originally designed to significantly intervene in the policy and systems space, the project was confronted by strong operational needs on the ground, and thus some minimal project reorientation was undertaken to drive more resources into meeting operational needs on the ground. This was a notable adaptability, which helped to keep the project relevant.

The evaluation therefore finds that the project was well-aligned with stakeholder needs, national and provincial priorities, the UNSDCF for South Africa under the Planet & Prosperity and Inclusive Economic Growth & Decent Work result areas, and to the SDGs specifically SDGs 5, 8 and 12. Limpopo's youth unemployment crisis, combined with the province's limited waste management infrastructure and the environmental threat of unmanaged e-waste, created an urgent dual challenge that the intervention directly

addressed. By framing e-waste not merely as pollution, but as a resource for green entrepreneurship, the project resonated deeply with both environmental and economic imperatives although its scale was limited to visibly address these imperatives - as discussed further in subsequent criteria. Beneficiaries repeatedly affirmed this relevance. Below is a collection of direct quotes supporting the notion that this project was relevant to real needs.

"This project was very relevant because before, I was just collecting waste without any knowledge... Now I know how to handle e-waste safely and even make business from it. It addressed the real problems we have here with unemployment and dirty environment." **Beneficiary entrepreneur, Female**

"This project is very relevant for our municipality and the province as a whole. We have high youth unemployment and serious challenges with waste management, especially e-waste. The project directly addresses these two issues by empowering young people with skills and turning waste into economic opportunities. It fits perfectly with our Integrated Waste Management Plan." **Municipality Official, Female**

"The project was very relevant to our needs. Most of us young people are unemployed and this gave us a real opportunity in e-waste which is growing. It was exactly what we needed - skills, equipment and business knowledge." **Beneficiary entrepreneur, Female**

"This project builds on the circular economy initiative that came before" **ILO staff, Female.**

"The project was borne out of a feasibility study and varied UN missions to the province" **ILO staff, Male.**

On whether the project design was appropriate given the budget, time and implementation context, the evaluation assessment is that it was conceptually strong but slightly ambitious for a 12-month implementation period, being implemented in a geographical area without ILO's on the ground presence, devoid of prior partnerships agreements and a \$1.5 million budget. A second phase would obviously benefit from the new partnerships created. By attempting to deliver simultaneous policy integration, widespread procurement and delivery of items to 22 different municipal locations, beneficiary identification from the 22, capacitation and elaborate business start-up processes, the project faced significant risks of overload, which materialised as delays in delivering all start up items, relatively rushed or one time activities, phase out before initiated processes, partnerships and businesses had matured and relatively small scale of "impact" due to small beneficiary size and limited geographical reach within each municipality for the nature of outcomes. While the design appropriately balanced relevance, stakeholder engagement, and inclusivity (youth, women, and PWDs), it would have benefited from a narrower scope, such as a concentrated geographic focus, and prioritisation of core operational outputs over broader systemic reforms, especially given that the national government was already in the process of entrenching systemic reforms with the gazettment of the new e-waste policy. Such considerations would have enhanced project feasibility and deliver stronger, more visible results within the tight timeframe. As discussed under effectiveness and impact criteria, the "difference" that the project made is yet to be tested over time and at this point, most of observed changes are prospective.

5.2. Coherence

Overall Assessment: Positive (85%): Strong alignment with key national and provincial frameworks and policies; good complementarity with existing circular economy efforts.

In evaluation practice, coherence criteria is assessed both in terms of internal and external coherence. Internal coherence focuses on the level of alignment of a project to existing policies, frameworks and initiatives, to make it the best fit rather than an unnecessary or duplicative intervention. External coherence looks at the dual interplay between a project and external systems/policies and structures - how they affect each other. This evaluation has established strong coherence attributes both internally and externally. The project demonstrates a strong alignment with key frameworks. Firstly, it aligns well with National and Provincial Policy Frameworks. The project was deliberately designed to support South Africa's *Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Regulations*, and the *National Waste Management Strategy*. It contributed to the implementation of the recently published *National E-Waste Policy*, by raising awareness and building grassroots capacity for responsible e-waste management. To this effect, from an external coherence perspective, the project positively impacted the Policy. The new policy on the other hand provided the justification for a project enhancement (to create awareness) and at the same time provided content for

such awareness. The dual interplay as referenced above was therefore positive - complementary rather than competitive or detrimental.

A review of documents as well as interviews revealed that the project builds upon past and present circular economy initiatives by the South African government, the ILO in South Africa and EWASA to mention a few. It therefore complements, rather than competes. It builds upon ILO's Circular economy initiative, and according to ILO staff helped take forward key ILO priorities in the Southern Africa around green jobs. At the time this project was implemented, ILO in South Africa did not have any other relevant project, besides the earlier Circular economy initiative stated above. This project was therefore viewed not only as a good fit, but more of an effort to keep ILO's work in this area visible. The project also advanced ILO's DWCP, most strongly under the priority *"More and better jobs for inclusive growth (especially Outcome 1.1: Improved labour market interventions for youth, women, PWDs)"*. The project contributes directly by creating green/decent jobs and skills in the circular economy, targeting high youth unemployment in Limpopo. It also contributes to *"Outcome 1.2 Formalization of informal economy & SME growth"* because it helped set up formal enterprises in e-waste, an area traditionally characterized by informality. The Limpopo e-waste project is was therefore not just aligned, it is a practical, on-the-ground implementation of South Africa's DWCP priorities, particularly in creating decent green jobs for youth in a circular economy while advancing environmental sustainability and policy strengthening.

When it comes to social dialogue and tripartism (another aspiration of the DWCP), the project demonstrated strong synergy with key stakeholders in government and private sector-national, provincial, municipal, TVETs, EWASA and other providers. The strong collaboration with LEDET resulted in a broad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that extended project alignment and support across 22 municipalities. Municipal officials confirmed that the project had an influence on the extent to which they were considering e-waste in their Integrated Waste Management Plans (IWMPs). This ILO project/LEDET/Municipality coherence brought complementarity which enhanced the project scale, a sign of beneficial interplay between the project and stakeholders on the ground. Municipal and LEDET officials stated the following

"This project is very relevant for our municipality... It fits perfectly with our Integrated Waste Management Plan." **Municipal Official, Female**

"We have started the process of integrating the e-waste component into our Integrated Waste Management Plan. The training and the model from this ILO project will help us a lot in implementing that." **Municipal Official, Male**

"Through this project, several municipalities are now updating their Integrated Waste Management Plans to include proper e-waste management streams and the involvement of youth entrepreneurs." **LEDET Official, Male**

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) served as an effective coordination platform, bringing together ILO, LEDET, DFFE, EWASA, municipalities, and TVET colleges (coherence boosting). This structure helped avoid *duplication* and promoted *complementarity* - both key areas of assessment under coherence criteria. EWASA's involvement albeit late in the project, helped link beneficiaries to broader industry value chains and PROs and provides an opportunity for post project support and follow up. The role that EWASA is expected to play in this post project period, established through an MOU with ILO, is a good testament of complementarity.

"The PSC was quite successful in terms of coordination. Meetings were regular and partners were engaged. It helped to keep everyone accountable and on track." **ILO staff member, Female**

"The Project Steering Committee worked very well. It created a platform where we could share challenges and successes. I think it was one of the strong points of this project." **Municipal Official, Male**

"I can say the Steering Committee was successful. It brought all the right people together and we were able to discuss issues and find solutions. It really added value to the project." **LEDET Official, Male**

The partnerships established with TVET colleges (e.g., Waterberg and Lephalale) to integrate e-waste dismantling and management modules into existing curricula also demonstrates complementarity rather than duplication. ILO did not need to set up parallel training and capacity development arrangements. It set a path for the utilization of existing ones, which is a key attribute in ensuring that this initiative was a 'good fit' rather than a new 'standalone solution' to capacity building and capacity development in e-Waste. It also ensures that the skills developed were not short-term but would continue to contribute to long-term capacity development in the province.

The study tour to Japan provided exposure and learning from advanced circular economy practices, which were then to be adapted to the South African context. Although tour participants do not represent a statistically significant number to expect significant change, the evaluations views it as a symbolic and seed sowing exercise, but more especially coherence boosting in that the Limpopo practices would be in harmony with global/advanced e-waste management practices. The donor (Japanese Embassy in South Africa) appreciated this localisation effort.

"We know the South African local community system not so much... I think your good office did a really great job to implement our system to local communities." **Donor Representative, Female.**

In summary, the project scores well on coherence because it worked through and with existing structures (LEDET, municipalities, EWASA, TVET colleges) instead of creating parallel systems. This approach enhanced efficiency and laid a foundation for sustainability. While implementation was constrained by the short 12-month timeframe, the partnership architecture and policy alignment were consistently praised by stakeholders, as strategic, and well considered - a sentiment that also matches this evaluation's analysis.

5.3. Effectiveness

Overall Assessment - *Positive to Mixed (75% Positive)*. Strong delivery on training, equipment, awareness, and enterprise initiation, but mixed on full income generation and licensing due to time and structural constraints

The project was structured around two primary outcomes. This section assesses the extent to which each outcome was achieved and analyses how the respective outputs contributed to them.

Outcome 1: Strengthened e-waste management system and policy framework

The project achieved moderate progress toward this outcome. While it did not significantly influence national policy development (as the key EPR regulations and National E-Waste Policy were already in place), it contributed meaningfully to provincial and municipal-level awareness, planning, and institutional readiness for better e-waste management in the future if all assumptions (such as continued municipality commitment) continue to hold. This moderate level of outcome contribution was supported by key achievements in the two main outputs:

- **Output 1.1 E-waste policies evaluated and enhanced:** This output was largely achieved. The project conducted assessments of the provincial regulatory framework, developed Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) guidelines specific to e-waste recycling, and created a standard business plan template for e-waste enterprises. It also successfully brought the E-Waste Association of South Africa (EWASA) on board to support beneficiaries with compliance and market linkages. These actions enhanced local understanding and operational readiness, even if direct changes to provincial policy were limited. It set precedence for provincial level "policy" level strengthening especially because the right provincial department (LEDET) and municipalities (bylaw creators and implementors of e-waste management) were part and parcel of the project.
- **Output 1.2 Creation of community awareness on e-waste recycling:** This output was fully achieved and, in some areas, exceeded targets. Through community gatherings, outreach campaigns, and engagement with municipal structures, the project raised awareness about e-waste hazards and the value of formal recycling. The community awareness survey showed that 64% of respondents reached by project activities reported an average knowledge gain of 8.56 out of 10. The physical in-person gatherings were the most popular sources of information (reported by 39% of respondents (n=51). Though a baseline was not available, a majority of respondents (82%) seem to know that e-waste materials should be taken to designated recycling/collection stations or sold to e-waste collectors. This is a key leverage for the supported entrepreneurs. Only a paltry 4% feel that waste should be stored at home. 76% know where to take e-waste, and an overwhelming majority demonstrate on the overall a positive perception on the value of e-waste and its management. This suggests a good knowledge shift from the anecdotal information that before this project, community members would just hold e-waste at home or dispose together with other household waste. Several municipalities began integrating e-waste into their Integrated Waste Management Plans (IWMPs) as a direct result of project engagement and the Project Steering Committee (PSC) discussions.

Collectively, these two outputs contributed to improved municipal relationships (81% of beneficiaries rated them as good or very good) and laid a foundation for better policy implementation at local level in line with the Outcome. However, the short project duration limited deeper systemic change in the relevant policies, laws, bylaws strategies and plans. The project however, did set the motion towards future achievement of the outcome.

Outcome 2: Increased youth skills, employment, and entrepreneurship in the e-waste sector

The project achieved good progress on this outcome at the output and immediate result level, though full enterprise maturation and sustained income generation were constrained by the one-year timeframe and regulatory barriers.

This outcome was advanced through two key outputs:

- **Output 2.1 E-Waste recycling skills developed in Limpopo Province:** This output was highly successful. All 22 beneficiaries, most of whom had no prior experience in e-waste handling, received practical, hands-on technical training (including training on Occupational Safety and Health) in safe dismantling, sorting, grading, and identification of valuable components. Beneficiaries consistently reported high confidence in their technical abilities, describing the training they received as practical and transformative. The evaluation shares a strong positive sentiment on the skills and knowledge transfer. The skills were acquired. What seems to remain is the practical application/use because as indicated earlier, most businesses were still at infancy when the project ended. The project also influenced the development of an e-waste curriculum with TVET colleges, creating potential for longer-term skills supply in the province.
- **Output 2.2 Business skills developed for targeted youth:** This output was also successfully delivered. Beneficiaries received entrepreneurship training through the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) and Generate Your Business (GYB) methodologies, along with ongoing support for business registration, compliance awareness, and market linkages. Beneficiaries were also introduced to social dialogue as part of their ongoing engagement with their respective local municipalities and other industry partners using the ILO tools on Social Dialogue. By project close, 76% of the supported enterprises had registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC). The project provided workspaces (containers), tools, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), enabling enterprise initiation. 100% of beneficiaries interviewed by the evaluator expressed strong optimism on their acquired ability to run e-waste enterprises as soon as all practical and compliance aspects are finalized.

As a result of these outputs, by the final beneficiary survey in March 2026, 52% of the 22 supported enterprises were operational and 48% were in the establishment phase. Collectively, the supported businesses had created 58 new jobs and employed 165 people in total (noting that two pre-existing larger enterprises influenced the aggregate figures). The project was effective in delivering its planned outputs and initiating meaningful change within a very short implementation window (effectively 9 months of active delivery). It performed particularly strongly on the following four aspects.

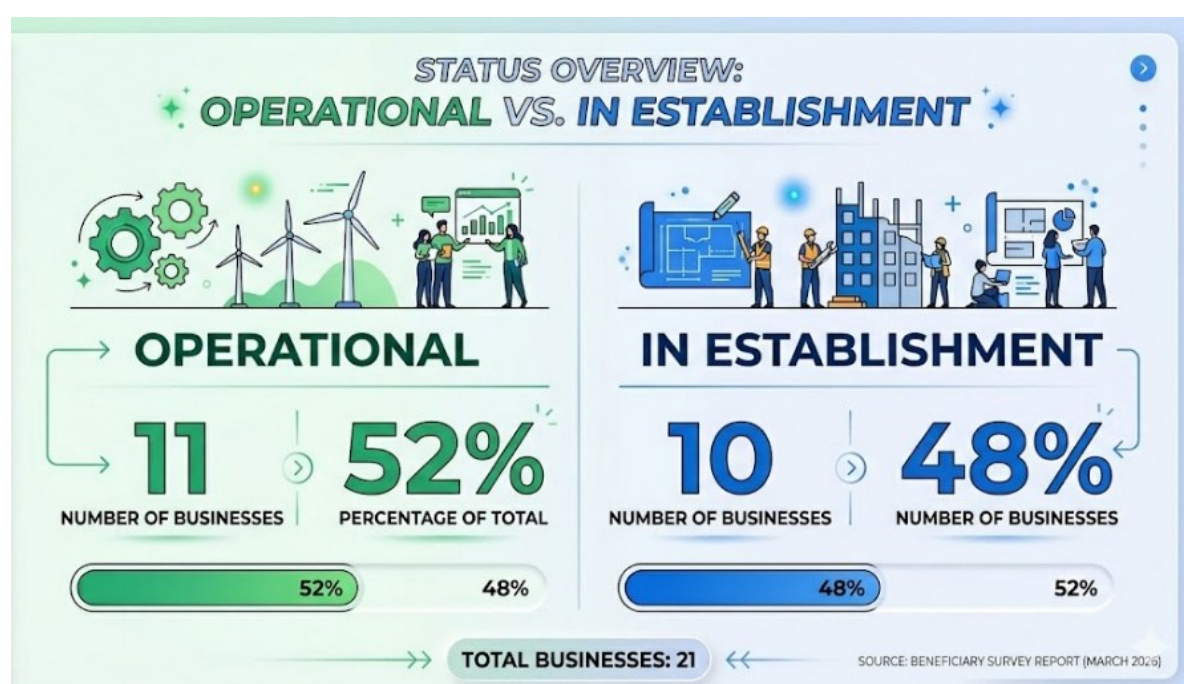
- a) Skills development: The project's investment in practical technical and business skills represents a lasting human capital gain that equips young people with marketable competencies. Beyond immediate project results, these skills create long-term employability and entrepreneurial resilience, enabling beneficiaries to adapt to evolving labour market demands even if individual enterprises face early challenges. Acquired knowledge and skills is transferable hence ripple effect may manifest in years to come.
- b) Initial enterprise formation: Supporting the establishment of 22 youth-led e-waste enterprises marks a critical shift from survivalist informal waste picking to structured business ownership. This achievement proves the viability of youth-driven circular economy models in rural provinces and creates living examples that can inspire broader economic participation among marginalised young people.
- c) Awareness raising: By raising community awareness on e-Waste hazards and job opportunities, the project helped shift local mindsets from unsafe disposal practices toward recognising waste as a

resource. This behavioural change lays the groundwork for increased supply of recoverable materials and stronger public support for formal recycling systems over time.

- d) **Building local partnerships that also attracted funding investment:** The project excelled at forging strong collaborations with LEDET, municipalities, and EWASA, which not only enhanced implementation but also leveraged additional ZAR 4.3 million in post-project funding. This demonstrates effective catalytic partnering that extends impact beyond donor resources and strengthens local institutional ownership for sustained action.

However, the combination of a compressed timeline, regulatory bottlenecks (especially licensing), and infrastructure gaps meant that the transition from outputs to sustained outcomes, particularly viable, income-generating businesses and systemic improvements in e-waste management -remains incomplete. The project successfully demonstrated a viable model but highlighted that deeper results in youth employment and circular economy development require longer-term support. The figure below summarizes the status of supported enterprises by project close (based on a survey of 21 businesses).

Figure 3. Operational and in-establishment phase businesses



Project Success factors

The project faced many constraints but still managed to deliver its targets. From interviews and desk review, the evaluation was able to decipher the following three major factors as having been key in the project's relative success in achieving activity targets and output results.

- 1) **Skills transfer:** Quality training that enabled trainees to acquire practical skills and going by the confidence they express on having the "know how" it can be concluded that once all regulatory aspects are finalized and businesses become fully operational, they would be able to scale. Some were able to start work immediately.

"The training was very good and practical... we learnt a lot in a short time." **Multiple beneficiaries**

"The skills we received were exactly what we needed." **Beneficiary, Female**

- 2) **Local Ownership:** Collaboration with municipalities, LEDET, and TVET colleges was frequently mentioned. As key players in the e-waste management space, they played a key role in supporting faster beneficiary identification, supporting with regulatory/licensing aspects, and providing much needed

support to the project. These partnerships were strategic and 81% of interviewed beneficiaries (in beneficiary follow up survey) have a positive sentiment on such partnerships as being good/very good.

"This project now feels like our own. We have integrated it into our Integrated Waste Management Plan and we are committed to continuing the support for the youth even after the ILO project ends." **Municipal official, Female**

"There is strong local ownership. The municipalities and our department have taken full responsibility for the project. We see it as part of our provincial programme, not just an ILO project." **LEDET official, Male**

"We have taken ownership of this initiative. We are planning to include the youth e-waste entrepreneurs in our municipal plans and budgets going forward." **Municipal official, Male**

- 3) **Useful Partnerships:** The project benefited significantly from strong partnerships. Collaboration with LEDET enabled wide coverage across 22 municipalities through a comprehensive MoU. The PSC effectively coordinated stakeholders, while partnerships with municipalities, EWASA, and TVET colleges strengthened market linkages, skills integration and created mechanisms for post project follow up. Working with EWASA to lead the procurement of infrastructure rather than ILO slow procurement processes was very strategic. These partnerships enhanced coherence and accelerated implementation despite the short project duration. It is however worth noting that as at the time this evaluation was conducted, delivery of infrastructure was still ongoing.

"Partnership with EWASA was very useful. They brought industry knowledge and helped beneficiaries understand the formal e-waste market. This was one of the success factors of the project." **ILO project staff, Female**

"EWASA came to visit us and explained how we can sell our dismantled materials. This gave us hope that we can continue even after the project ends." **Beneficiary, Male**

"EWASA's role in linking the young entrepreneurs to the bigger recycling value chain was crucial. We provided market information and connections to Producer Responsibility Organisations. This will help ensure the sustainability of the businesses started under the project." **EWASA staff member, Female**

Limitations/Barriers

The major constraints that hindered and continue to hinder progress towards sustainable results include,

1. **Short project duration:** The most frequently cited challenge. Many respondents noted that the project lifespan was too short for a complex intervention in a regulated sector.
 - Limited time for full enterprise consolidation, licensing, market development and ILO oversight.
2. **Licensing and regulatory barriers** Delays in obtaining critical permits were frequently cited as a major bottleneck to full scale operations.
 - SAPS Second-Hand Goods Licence
 - Hazardous Waste Management Licence (WML) and Transport Licences
 - Many beneficiaries still waiting for these at project end (only 29% had SAPS licence, 10–19% had hazardous waste licences).
3. **Lack of working capital:** Strongly mentioned by almost all beneficiaries.
 - Financial difficulty to purchase e-waste stock.
 - No dedicated seed capital as support was in material form.
4. **Transport and logistics constraints**
 - Lack of reliable vehicles for collection of e-waste.
 - High transport costs, especially in rural/sparse municipalities.
 - Cooperative helps somewhat, but not adequately as it still in infancy.
5. **Infrastructure deficits**

- Inadequate storage space (many containers too small or not yet renovated). Fears that they may run out of storage in near future.
- Full delivery of equipment not complete. Weighing scales as an example are yet to be provided.

"The project was too short. We needed more time for mentoring and to sort out the licences." **Multiple Beneficiaries**

"The main challenges are transport for collection and lack of capital to buy more e-waste. Also waiting for the licence from SAPS." **Beneficiary, Female**

"Transport is still a problem...We need more capital to grow the business." **Beneficiary, Female**

"The regulatory environment is tough. Getting all the licences takes longer than expected, especially for young entrepreneurs." **Municipal Official**

5.4. Efficiency

Overall Assessment: Mixed but Leaning Positive (≈ 65–70% Positive / Optimistic). Generally efficient given the project timeline; tight timeline reduced optimal efficiency.

The project demonstrated generally good efficiency and strong value for money, particularly considering its modest budget of USD 1,500,000 and short 12-month funding timeframe with even shorter implementation period due to delayed project start up. Stakeholders (including the donor) still view the intervention as a worthwhile and cost-effective pilot that delivered tangible interventions with relatively limited financial and time resources. The donor representative explicitly described the project as value for money (VFM) when asked her assessment on the VFM of the project. She stated;

"Yes, I think so, because we could see the beneficiaries running their business... protecting environment and also creating jobs. It's very nice, I think." **Donor representative, Female**

This sentiment was echoed by several beneficiaries and partners, who appreciated that the project successfully provided comprehensive support packages – both soft (skills), and hard (infrastructure), within a constrained period. This points to some good level of operational efficiency. Project expenditure also appears to have been acceptable given the late project start up, achieving a 95% burn rate by project close.

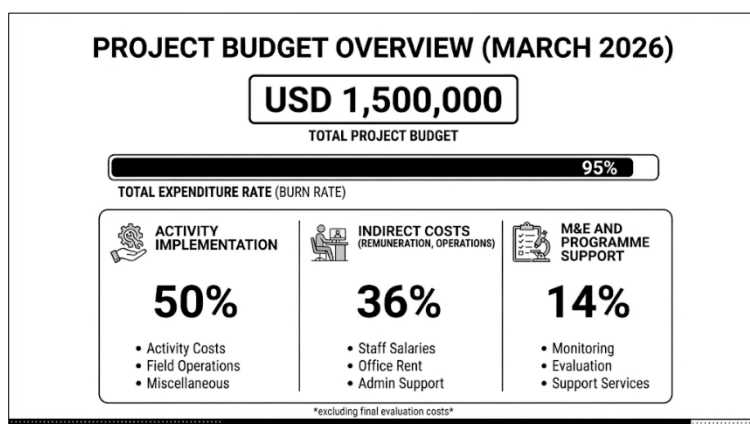


Figure 4. ILO e-waste expenditure summary. source: *Interview with project finance officer*

Figure 4 presents a snapshot of how the project budget was spent. A 95% expenditure rate for implementation that begun only in July 2025 till March 2026 is considerable. Budget allocation across different expenditure bands shows that more resources were dedicated to perform actual interventions on the ground, and support costs are justifiable given the travel-based implementation, as ILO did not have field office or other physical presence in Limpopo. The project was delivered by a lean team of four staff including a project manager, M&E officer, finance and communication officers, all of which

are strategic roles in such a project. There was a delay in their onboarding and this contributes to the delayed project start up. With this investment, some good outputs were achieved as discussed in effectiveness and impact criteria. This evaluation did not identify any major concerns around budget expenditure and/or the implementation model as though ILO driven, enough stakeholder involvement and ownership was achieved and that contributed to project efficiency in light of the time constraints. Stakeholders do not see a better implementation model as this project, though lacking ILO's on the ground continuous presence, managed to leverage stakeholders on the ground to perform the roles that ILO would

have performed. One beneficiary captured this positive perception well when she stated that the project “provided everything needed” and described it as “beautiful and comprehensive”.

The PSC, which is set to continue in the post project period, was frequently cited as an efficient coordination mechanism that helped align stakeholders, enhance ownership and support activity implementation. However, efficiency was tempered by notable constraints inherent to the short implementation period. Several beneficiaries and municipal officials, noted that the one-year duration was too brief, resulting in rushed startup, delayed equipment delivery for some participants, and insufficient time for full licensing processes and post-training mentorship. A key project staff, when asked to reflect on the project duration firmly retorted as follows,

“We had to implement in a rush...I would allocate [more] time. 3-5 years is more ideal.” **ILO project staff, Female**

Critical regulatory requirements particularly the SAPS Second-Hand Goods Licence and Waste Management & Transport Licences for hazardous waste could not be fully resolved within the project lifespan, limiting immediate revenue generation and formal market access for many entrepreneurs. The most some were doing to do the collections and store them up. Persistent infrastructure gaps in transport, storage, and working capital further reduced operational efficiency for a substantial portion of the cohort.

Overall, while the project achieved commendable first level results relative to its resources and timeframe, and was widely regarded as an efficient proof-of-concept, the compressed schedule constrained deeper consolidation and long-term outcomes. A longer implementation period would likely have enhanced future success potential by allowing more time for licensing support, market linkages, and enterprise maturation. The evaluation does acknowledge the short-term nature of the Japanese supplementary funding and notes that such funding would be most efficient if used to top up or expand an ongoing intervention, and much less as a standalone one.

5.5. Impact Orientation

Overall Assessment: Positive (80%). Clear individual-level impacts on skills, confidence, and early enterprise development. Emerging institutional and awareness changes; pioneering effect.

Given the project's one-year implementation period and the timing of this evaluation immediately after project closure, this evaluation distinguishes between observed impacts and prospective impacts. Observed impacts refer to changes that were directly evidenced during the evaluation period, including improvements in beneficiaries' technical and entrepreneurial skills, enterprise establishment, institutional partnerships, and increased awareness. Broader institutional, environmental and socioeconomic impacts are presented as emerging or prospective, reflecting early signs of change supported by stakeholder evidence, project monitoring data and contribution analysis, but which require additional time and future observation to confirm their durability and attribution. The positive sentiment is rooted in an individual sense of opportunity and dignity. For beneficiaries, the project gave them a rare skill. They consider this as a tool in hand, that they can deploy to improve their lives. Even where revenue is not yet realized, the sentiment remains positively high due to the quality of training and the physical infrastructure (containers, tools) provided, which participants view as a useful “starter kit” for success. These are observed changes. The only moderate sentiments arise from operational frustrations regarding the project's short duration, and late delivery of some equipment, delays in acquiring the required licences and for some, transport and cash to buy e-waste items where they are not able to get them for free like other waste items. There is no frustration recorded regarding the acquired skills and the confidence gained to venture into e-waste businesses as exemplified by the following statements captured during interviews.

“I didn't know anything about the business and e-waste, but now I know... I will work hard to make my business successful”. **Beneficiary, Female**

“I have strong determination to continue despite hardships...I believe patience will lead to success” **Beneficiary, Male**

“I have run many businesses in the past, but I never used to have them registered. I got know the importance of compliance” **Beneficiary, Male**

“It helped me to get close to the Municipality. If I need something, I now know who I can contact for help. He is like a mentor” **Beneficiary, Male**

Another beneficiary celebrates the unique opportunity and leverage the project has handed her.

"I didn't know where to start and which business I can do...you see? So, this one came up, then I was happy because I didn't know the business [I can] do. So, this one came up and I found out that there's no e-waste business here where I'm staying...you see? There's [are] other recyclers just for papers and stuff, but there's no e-waste recycler. So, I [find] this one [to be] good for me and I'm happy for it because I'm going to be alone here in my town doing e-waste recycling." **Beneficiary, Female**

Among officials, the sentiment is driven by the project's ability to provide a practical solution to illegal dumping, and youth unemployment, that aligns with national mandates. They view this project as pioneering. They report greater attention to e-waste than ever before, and as discussed in earlier sections, e-waste is increasingly being integrated into municipal waste management plans. Clearly the project shifted sentiment toward strategic optimism. A municipal official (female) in charge of waste management, from the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, praised the project for "*opening local leaders' eyes*" to the "*e-waste phenomena*" and for providing "*a forum for progress*" through the project steering committee. This institutional enthusiasm is further supported by the TVET Representative (Male), who described the project as an "*impact statement*" in itself, noting that his college's attention had been drawn to a "*new space altogether*" that they were never involved with before.

"Our attention has been drawn to something that we were not involved with at any stage before... we feel we are better than yesterday. That's really great. That's an impact statement there." **TVET College Representative, Male.**

"This project took me to Japan. I can't just let it go just like that.....but there, I saw it is possible." **TVET Lecturer, Male**

Impact is defined here as prospective long-term, sustainable change that will likely be realized in the future if current momentum is maintained. It is like a newly 'transplanted seedling' that if watered and taken care of, will continue to grow unto maturity and bear intended fruit, in the course of time. An analysis of sentiment from interviews and desk review highlights the following to be the main strings of "impact" that the project spurred, and that have future potential.

- **Formalization and recognition:** The project transformed waste pickers and recyclers from a perceived "nuisance" into recognized stakeholders who now have a "*chair on the table*" in municipal policy meetings according to LEDET and other key informants. This elevates those involved in this business from average community members to societal problem solvers and partners with municipal authorities. This is **social empowerment**.
- **Technical and business capacity building:** Beneficiaries gained advanced skills in dismantling, grading, and business plan development. As noted by one beneficiary (Female), she can now "*track every cent coming into the business*" and "*perform detailed costing*". Skills have in turn boosted personal confidence and elevated their intellectual capacity - **intellectual empowerment**.
- **Policy integration:** The project successfully influenced integration of e-waste management into the Integrated Waste Management Plans of participating municipalities, ensuring the sector is included in future performance management targets. When e-waste is integrated in all municipal plans, the project will have had a significant impact on e-waste governance – **a policy level impact**.
- **Vocational curriculum development:** The creation of an accredited training curriculum within the TVET system, provides a permanent institutional mechanism for youth to gain green skills in Limpopo. When the approved curricula are rolled out, and other TVETs design and roll out similar curricula, the project will have had a **lasting influence on TVET e-waste education, that incorporates all the decent work and occupational safety and health principles**. **Gender and Social inclusion:** The project maintained a strong focus on gender, with at least **45%** female participation in a sector largely perceived as a preserve for men. The project managed to change such social norms albeit at a small scale, and if these businesses flourish, it will continue to prove that women can effectively manage technical e-waste operations just like men. This is **gender**

empowerment with positive implications for shifting gender norms, gender roles and division of labour.

CASE STUDY

Xiluva, Owner of Holistic Future Networks. A Confident and Quick-Starting Female Entrepreneur in Greater Tzaneen

Xiluva, a determined young woman from Greater Tzaneen Municipality, successfully transitioned into e-waste entrepreneurship with remarkable speed and confidence. Prior to the project, she had limited business skills and was not actively involved in formal waste management. Through the ILO project, she received technical training in safe e-waste dismantling and grading, combined with SIYB business training. She positively describes the ILO sponsored training events and project activities.

"I felt very safe during the training... I was treated equally with men... The project provided everything I needed."

After training, she was equipped with tools, PPE, and a workspace container. Within just one week of completing the training, she had already started operations. What kept her pushing is passion. A strong drive to venture into new territories and make it work. The project spurred passion in her. She acquired a new tool at hand that she could use not only to solve an environmental problem, but also help her eke out a living.

"The project was very relevant to our needs. Most of us young people are unemployed and this gave us a real opportunity in e-waste which is growing. It was exactly what we needed – skills, equipment and business knowledge."

An outstanding accolade is that she has taken it upon herself to not only be business practitioner. She understands that an educated community will be a key ally for her business. She therefore undertakes awareness creation in her community on e-waste. A much-needed education is now conducted by a new entrant in the e-waste space, courtesy of the project. She has been particularly successful in this such that she has been able to amass e-waste items freely by the community letting go of long held e-waste. Through her giving (community education), she is receiving. This is going to be useful in optimizing her profits when she starts sales. For now, she has just been collecting. She is using community leverage to boost her future business. The training significantly strengthened her business capabilities. She noted:

"Previously I did not know how to write a business plan or do proper costing... Now I am capable of developing business plans and calculating detailed costing... I can track every cent."

She reports *"extremely high"* confidence in her business and praised the project's gender-sensitive approach that has equipped her with skills to operate in a mostly male dominated space. She is also an active member of a cooperative, which will help address transport challenges as they would help each other to transport collected items to the established processing centres/stores. Her story highlights the project's success in empowering young women in a traditionally male-dominated sector and demonstrates rapid enterprise activation when skills, equipment, and motivation align.

5.6. Sustainability

Overall Assessment: Positive 80%. Technical skills and institutional integration viewed as permanent assets that will outlast the funding cycle

While stakeholders acknowledge the project's short duration, the sentiment is driven by a strong belief that the project did not just "give fish" but provided "the rod and the training". This is a belief shared by both beneficiaries and stakeholders. The project's sustainability is anchored in three primary pillars that stood out for the evaluation: Individual resilience created, institutional integration, and structural collaboration.

a. Individual resilience and skill retention

The most immediate evidence of sustainability is the transformation of the 22 beneficiaries into entrepreneurs. Beneficiaries consistently report that the knowledge acquired (technical dismantling, business plan development, and financial management) was a permanent "asset" they now own.

"This project gave me the chance to stand on my own". Beneficiary, Female

"Success now depends on personal effort and commitment. I believe ILO delivered every necessary resource". Beneficiary, Female

b. Institutionalization

A key strategy for long-term sustainability was ensuring e-waste was not treated as a "special project" but as a core municipal function. The project, through activities under outcome 1, successfully influenced the need for integration of e-waste recycling into the IWMPs of participating municipalities, although currently at varying levels. There is an intention to potentially amend local bylaws in some of the municipalities, to specifically include e-waste regulations, which (when done) will be a good step moving beyond plans to enforceable instruments. The development of an approved training curriculum specifically for e-waste education at TVETs ensures that these skills can be "churned out" by local institutions even after the ILO's departure. Other examples of institutionalizing include the retention of the project's steering committee (PSC). It was pointed out by both ILO and LEDET that the PSC was poised to continue beyond the project. Meetings are scheduled monthly and in the PSC meetings (convened by LEDET), updates on life after project close are provided. This if sustained, will further institutionalize a multi-stakeholder approach to e-waste management. Additionally, the DFFE view during this evaluation was that this project was not seen as standalone initiative, but as a learning model. They termed it as a *"flagship"* project, piloting practical implementation of the e-waste national policy and EPR legislation. DFFE also communicated their desire for similar follow up projects in the country and were at the time mobilizing resources towards that end. This points to some level of institutionalization (of practical e-waste interventions) beyond policies and legislations.

"E-waste education and awareness will be a target for my 2026-27 performance management system"
Municipal official, Female

c. Structural collaboration and the cooperative model

The project fostered a cooperative structure designed to solve the two greatest barriers to sustainability: high transport costs and lack of local processing facilities. The cooperative membership is critical because shared transportation to processing plants in Johannesburg is significantly more economical than individual transport. Sustainability is further supported by ongoing mentoring through local NGO partners and PROs like EWASA, which will continue to coordinate support on behalf of the ILO going forward. The fact that an MOU exists to formalize this post project work, scores more credit to the project's sustainability. From this evaluation analysis, the project contributed to put in place some five factors that in this evaluation's opinion will likely continue to drive longevity of the benefits accrued from this project. These are listed below and discussed briefly in table 4 that is on the next page.

- 1) Asset ownership
- 2) Acquired knowledge and ripple effect
- 3) Market Access & linkage
- 4) Growing awareness on e-waste
- 5) Complementary funding

Table 3. Summary of Sustainability Drivers

Driver	Evidence acquired
Asset ownership	Beneficiaries received containers, tools, and PPE, providing the physical infrastructure needed for long-term operation. Having a physical work site and prerequisite tools and equipment is a significant boost for a start-up, than if they were left to set up spaces on their own. The project gave them a critical headstart. As the key one (containers) are placed in public places, and are owned by the municipality, the risk of privatization is reduced and can therefore benefit future entrepreneurs in case the current one quits.
Acquired knowledge & transfer	Having a skill at a hand is always a key leverage that one can use for their economic welfare. It is a permanent asset. The ripple effect sets in when that knowledge is transmitted further. Beneficiaries are already training others (their counterparts & assistants). This demonstrates skill retention and possible community-level scaling. On the other hand, when TVETs implement curricula, there will be a steady supply of skilled e-waste managers.
Market access & linkage	Introduction to certified recycling processors and industry bodies like EWASA ensures a permanent "buyer" for recovered materials. Having EWASA in the picture is in itself a positive attribute as they are a core stakeholder in e-waste space. All interviewed beneficiaries did not express fears on where to sell recovered/recycled items.
Growing awareness on e-waste - a dividend for the environment	The shift from hazardous burning, unsafe disposal of electronic waste items to compliant dismantling, storage and recycling or sale is a permanent behavioural change that will benefit community health in the long-term, albeit at a small scale. When awareness spreads and communities begin to safely dispose or surrender e-waste to those with the know-how, the net gain is a safer and healthier homes and environment. The more people have awareness the more likely the supported enterprises will thrive.
Complementary funding	The funding commitment by EWASA (ZAR 4.3 million) to continue supporting the beneficiaries in the post project period gives the project a new lease - an extension in some way, that will allow post project mentorship and oversee enterprise maturation, while keeping e-waste high on the policy agenda in Limpopo.

Having said that, significant structural risks that could hamper sustainability remain and include:

- **Licensing delays:** may discourage entrepreneurs and/or force them to start illegal operations which would potentially face closure by authorities when discovered.
- **Infrastructure deficits:** For those who are yet to receive all the equipment, demotivation may also set in that will slow down the momentum.
- **Income instability:** Probability of profit making is moderate and is largely dependent on the ability to acquire e-waste items and ongoing support especially for those doing this business for the first time.

5.7. Cross-Cutting Issues

Overall Assessment: Strongly Positive (90%). Well mainstreamed; mainstreams women's participation in e-waste space; PSC main platform for social dialogue and to enhance tripartism

a. Gender Equality, non-discrimination and inclusion

The Project demonstrates a strong and intentional focus on gender mainstreaming, non-discrimination, and inclusiveness. Overall, the project successfully promoted women's participation in a traditionally male-dominated sector, created safe and equitable learning environments, and contributed to building the confidence and technical skills of female beneficiaries - essential as waste management is largely a male dominated field. Municipalities played an active role by biasing beneficiary selection towards women.

Female participants consistently reported positive experiences regarding safety and equal treatment during project processes like training events. One of them when asked on her experience quipped,

"I felt very safe throughout the project with no discomfort or exclusion.... i never felt excluded from any activity due to being female...i was comfortable throughout the entire programme." **Beneficiary, Female**

The project went beyond numerical targets by equipping women with technical and business skills. 100% of interviewed female beneficiaries expressed high confidence in continuing their enterprises independently showing some level of empowerment irrespective of one's gender. The formation of cooperatives was particularly beneficial for women, as it enabled shared transport costs and collective bargaining power. ILO's Gender Specialist highlighted the importance of skills access as a core gender component and stressed the need for meaningful equity targets, suggesting that a well-supported 30% target could be more impactful than a rushed 50%. This line of thinking resonates with this evaluation's assessment on the project's gender mainstreaming score. Although the original 60% women target was not achieved as traditionally, waste business is perceived to be a male business, we are of the view that the 45% achieved is a good achievement for a pilot initiative as this.

The evaluation finds some level of intentionality in dealing with gender inequality, such as the quotas that were reserved for women. The project however missed an opportunity to conduct a proper gender analysis to unravel all aspects related to gender equality, norms, roles and division of labour and GBV. No structured gender analysis was conducted before or during the project. Gender analysis helps to unravel how gender inequality, discrimination and marginalization manifests in those communities. The main mainstreaming approach used therefore seems to have been on restricted to "representation and fair distribution" of project benefits. However, there are also other ways of integrating gender perspectives by for example integrating information and behaviour change communication on topical and well-known gender issues in the country such as Gender Based Violence (GBV) which can be in training sessions and in awareness creation. Providing child care and lactation support for those who may need it is another practical way of accommodating gendered needs.

The short project duration was repeatedly cited as a barrier to more transformative gender outcomes. Because of the small scale of this project, broader sectoral challenges will likely continue to persist, with women often confined to downstream roles while men dominate technical dismantling and sale activities. That is why project scale (size and longevity) are important aspects in disrupting gender norms and roles. For this project, an effort to ensure equal access to project benefits and representation of all genders seems to wrap up the scale of gender mainstreaming. It ended there, but perhaps more could be done in future projects, such as putting in measures and educational content on GBV, keenly considering where containers for female entrepreneurs are located to ensure safe and convenient access as women are often tied by reproductive gender roles, whose venue is around the home. If business sites are a far distance, it may disadvantage female entrepreneurs, coupled with safety concerns in long distance travel. These are just some examples, but a structured gender analysis pre or during a project (even low budget) can provide strategic information to mainstream gender issues with greater intelligence. There was no evidence available to suggest that structured gender analysis was conducted and/or gender considerations was a strong and formal criteria guiding such specific actions related to as an example- location of containers, safety measures in and around those containers, timing of activities, support to female participants with reproductive roles among others. The biggest benefit related to gender is that by imparting skills and knowledge and supporting women enterprises, the project strengthened the individual women's personal mastery and agency. Intersectional inclusion (particularly for persons with disabilities and the most vulnerable rural women) received policy-level attention but appears less systematically documented in implementation results. There was intent to give a chance to Persons with Disabilities, but none was presented as a beneficiary. The supported cohort did however include persons from all municipalities, and a mix of city, urban townships and rural based beneficiaries. In this sense, there was inclusion.

b. Social Dialogue

A cornerstone of the project's delivery was the use of the ILO's tripartite-plus model of social dialogue, which brings together government, workers' organizations, employers, and community stakeholders. This collaborative approach was essential for navigating the complex regulatory environment of South Africa's waste sector and for ensuring that the project's benefits were institutionalized at the municipal level. The

social dialogue mechanism functioned through the PSC that included LEDET, the DFFE, and local municipalities. A municipal representative who participated in the PSC forums (Female) highlighted the effectiveness of this dialogue in aligning project goals with local government mandates, noting that the PSC provided a forum where *"the municipality was able to give input and also receive feedback on the project's progress."* This collaboration ensured that e-waste was not treated as an isolated environmental issue but as a core component of local economic development.

The inclusion of institutional partners like the TVET colleges further deepened the dialogue, connecting vocational training with industry needs. By involving educational institutions, the project ensured that the skills being taught were recognized by both the state and the private sector. It is worth noting however, that actual implementation of training programmes is yet to start. The benefits discussed here are therefore only prospective not actual. Finally, the dialogue extended to the "plus" in the model - the beneficiaries and their cooperative. The project facilitated a direct line of communication between the youth entrepreneurs and the EWASA, representing the employer/industry side. This linkage provided beneficiaries with a path to formal markets that they could not have accessed individually. As one Male LEDET Representative noted, the strength of the project lay in this coordination: *"The coordination was out of this world... integrated waste management now matches municipal mandates,"* signifying that social dialogue successfully moved e-waste management from the periphery into the centre of provincial and local government planning, at least in theory, as it the longevity of this coordination that will bring results. The evaluation noted some good level of goodwill to continue this drive.

c. Environmental Sustainability

The project made a meaningful, albeit modest, contribution to environmental sustainability by linking youth entrepreneurship with circular economy principles in a province struggling with poor e-waste management. It promoted safer and more responsible e-waste management practices. By training 22 youth entrepreneurs in proper dismantling, sorting, and grading techniques, it will in the long run help reduce harmful practices such as open burning and indiscriminate dumping, which releases toxic substances (lead, mercury, and other heavy metals) into soil, water, and air. The provision of designated collection containers and PPE will support the diversion of e-waste from landfills and informal disposal sites toward formal recovery channels. Although the overall volume to be processed through the 22 centres in the province is limited, the initiative establishes models for functional recycling streams that can be replicated widely, which is what will create adequate scale that will have tangible benefits for the environment.

Indirectly and at the systemic level, one of the project's strongest environmental contributions was at the awareness and institutional level. Community awareness campaigns, combined with engagement through the PSC increased local recognition of e-waste as both a hazard and a resource. Several municipalities began integrating e-waste management into their IWMPs, creating a platform for potential longer-term systemic change. The project also strengthened partnerships with EWASA and TVET colleges, laying foundations for continued skills development in safe e-waste handling beyond the project lifecycle.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The final independent evaluation of the ILO E-Waste for Youth Employment project in Limpopo Province (April 2025 – March 2026) concludes that this was a **successful, high-merit proof-of-concept initiative** that effectively demonstrated the potential of linking environmental protection with youth entrepreneurship in the circular economy. Despite operating under significant constraints - a one-year supplementary budget, a highly regulated sector, and dispersed rural geography, the project delivered some tangible results that justify its strategic relevance and warrant scaling with targeted improvements.

On **Relevance question**, the project scored exceptionally high. It responded directly to Limpopo's pressing realities of youth unemployment, unmanaged e-waste pollution, and limited green skills, while aligning closely with national priorities (EPR, National Waste Management Strategy), the UNSDCF, and SDGs5, 8 &12, 5. Its underlying Theory of Change was logical and purposeful, successfully connecting skills development, asset provision, compliance support, and market linkages. What now remains is to put it to the test- a function of time as the project closed before this could happen.

Coherence was strong. The intervention complemented and reinforced existing municipal IWMPs, EWASA activities, DFFE/LEDET programmes, and TVET efforts. The Project Steering Committee and partnerships with municipalities and TVET colleges created useful platforms for coordination and potential systemic

change. It was not a stand-alone project, a competing project or duplicator. It was a strategic fit with the only bottleneck being around its scale and timeline, for the nature of gaps it was trying to fill.

Effectiveness was solid given the timeframe. All 22 targeted youth received comprehensive training (technical and business related). By project close, 52% of enterprises were operational and 48% in active establishment. The cohort created 58 new jobs, employed 165 people in total, and supported 118 family members directly. Compliance advanced significantly in foundational areas (76% CIPC registration), while community awareness rose markedly (64% reach, +8.56/10 knowledge gain). Municipal relationships were a standout success (81% rated good or very good). Challenges in licensing, infrastructure, and working capital slowed full realisation but does not undermine the overall trajectory.

Efficiency was good. Resources were deployed effectively to deliver an integrated package of training, equipment, and support. Gender-responsive and inclusive planning was evident throughout with visible intentionality to ensure women entrepreneurs were part of the beneficiary group. While a longer implementation period would have allowed deeper progress on compliance and infrastructure, the project maximised value within the short-term supplementary budget constraints and managed to attract additional funding in EWASA for continued post project follow up.

Impact Orientation is promising. Individual-level impacts are more visible and include profound skills gains, increased confidence, and entrepreneurial agency, vividly captured in beneficiary stories. Institutional impacts are prospective at this stage and include TVET running training programmes, municipal integration plans, and policy-level attention. Environmental awareness and safer e-waste handling practices are emerging at community level.

Sustainability is moderately established but remains vulnerable especially because the project graduated when sustainability measures had just been achieved. Strong local ownership (however long it lasts), cooperative structure, and municipal relationships provide a solid foundation if they continue to work as expected. Some operational constraints such as persistent licensing gaps, infrastructure deficits, and income instability for nearly half the cohort pose significant risks. So, while there is a positive sentiment that these will be sustainable, continued support from LEDET, EWASA, municipalities, and other PROs remain critical in the immediate to short term post-project period.

Cross-cutting issues were well addressed. Gender equality was meaningfully mainstreamed, with women beneficiaries reporting safety, equal treatment, and empowerment in a male-dominated field. Social dialogue was advanced through tripartite-inspired structures (PSC) and cooperative models. Environmental sustainability and capacity development (individual, organisational, and emerging institutional) were central to the intervention's logic and results.

Overall Evaluation Conclusion: With valid and reliable conclusions grounded in rigorous triangulation of surveys, interviews, project data and documentation, it is plausible to conclude that ***the project demonstrated clear merit and worth. It successfully piloted a replicable model for youth-led e-waste management that balances decent work creation with environmental protection.*** While time and resource barriers limited depth in programming, the initiative's achievements in a short period are impressive and provide a strong evidence base for future programming.

7. LESSONS LEARNT AND GOOD PRACTICES

Lessons Learned

1. **One-year project duration is too short for meaningful enterprise development in the e-waste sector.** The compressed timeline, combined with startup delays, meant that many beneficiaries were still in the early establishment or pre-revenue phase at project closure. Licensing, market linkages, and operational scaling require more time than was available. Both implementers and partners repeatedly highlighted that a minimum of 2–3 years would be needed for this nature of projects to allow consolidation and sustainable results.
2. **Infrastructure and working capital gaps severely limit the translation of training into viable businesses.** While technical and business training was largely successful, the absence of reliable transport, adequate storage, weighing scales, and capital to purchase e-waste (rather than relying on donations) appear to be key constraints to collection volumes and income generation. Starting capital

(cash) in addition to equipment/infrastructure can be an essential catalyst especially for those starting from scratch.

3. **Regulatory compliance processes, particularly the SAPS Second-Hand Goods Licence, are major bottlenecks.** Slow and bureaucratic licensing prevented several beneficiaries from legally buying and selling e-waste, even after receiving training and equipment and company registrations. This created a disconnect between skills acquired and ability to operate formally. These requirements are essential for ensure that they are completed while the project is still active, to avoid potential illegal trading.
4. **Differentiated support is required for a heterogeneous beneficiary cohort.** The group included both complete novices and some with prior recycling experience. Some were at different economic situations and different localities. A one-size-fits-all approach led to uneven outcomes where some appeared stuck, while others were literally flying. Stronger initial assessment and tailored post-project support for emerging versus more established enterprises would improve effectiveness.
5. **Strong municipal and institutional relationships are foundational for sustainability, but require concrete post-project commitments.** Where municipalities provided space, ongoing coordination, or integration into waste plans, beneficiaries performed better. However, many relationships remained relational rather than formal, and though positive relationships are observed, many lacked concrete operational commitments such as dedicated collection routes, ongoing storage solutions, regular mentorship and monitoring arrangements by municipalities, budget allocation, all of which may limit scaling and sustainability, highlighting the need for formalised handover and continued support mechanisms especially with the municipalities.

Best Practices

1. **Strategic container placement combined with community awareness campaigns:** Placing containers in high-access locations (e.g., near taxi ranks and residential areas) dramatically improved collection efficiency and community participation. One female beneficiary in Greater Tzaneen achieved strong voluntary donations and minimal transport challenges through this approach, turning a common logistical barrier into a competitive advantage.
2. **Deliberate gender mainstreaming through targeted selection (60% women) and women-led cooperative formation:** Municipalities actively biased selection toward women, resulting in pioneering a cohort of women e-waste entrepreneurs in a relatively male dominated field. "Intentionality" is the best practice to be highlighted, because it forced those identifying beneficiaries to go beyond the usual, and bring women on board. The formation of cooperatives enabled women to collectively address transport costs to distant markets; a highly effective strategy to building a community where they learn from each other but mor importantly work in solidarity in the face of challenges.
3. **Holistic training model combining technical skills, business development (SIYB/GYB), and direct industry exposure (facility visits):** The integration of safe dismantling training with practical business planning, compliance, and real-world exposure through visits to established recyclers in Johannesburg and Durban created transformative learning experience. The skills confidence that each interviewed entrepreneur exhibited, is a testament that the training and delivery model was effective - practical rather than theoretical. Beneficiaries moved from unskilled persons to confident, compliant technicians, with several describing the skills gained as "*life-changing*."

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations flow logically from the findings and conclusions.

Recommendation 1: Accelerate post-project compliance and infrastructure support

Addressed to: ILO CO, LEDET, EWASA, Municipalities | **Priority:** High | **Resources:** Medium | **Timing:** Short-term (0–6 months)

ILO Country Office, LEDET, DFFE, EWASA, and municipalities should immediately implement a six-month transition package focusing on licensing facilitation (especially SAPS and hazardous waste licences), cooperative aggregation for shared transport/storage, and targeted working capital or credit linkages for the beneficiaries still struggling to start. The transition period would be a critical bridge to ensure all promised items are delivered to beneficiaries and a coordinated support framework between municipalities, EWASA and LEDET is agreed upon for coordinated ongoing support and mentorship to the 22 entrepreneurs. This can still be done within the context of the PSC, which should continue to instil a sense of continuity, rather than closure among beneficiaries and other project participants.

Recommendation 2: Enhance resource mobilization for a differentiated scale-up programme

Addressed to: ILO Regional Office, HQ Technical Units, LEDET and DFFE, Japan & other Donors | **Priority:** High | **Resources:** High | **Timing:** Medium-term (12–24 months)

There is no doubt that this was a useful project needed not only in Limpopo but in all provinces of the Republic. The scale of this project was small to effect long term outcomes that can be felt. Now that it worked and worked well under the circumstances, it would be beneficial to use this model to advocate for similar programmes by government and donors alike. A scale up programme would however need to segment support according to enterprise maturity (novice vs established vs. emerging), integrate with TVET systems and support them to actually roll out trainings using approved curricula, establish formal financing mechanisms for e-waste based small enterprises in municipalities, and expand to additional provinces. A scaled-up programme should be longer (2-3 years at minimum) in order to allow adequate time for observation, support and mentorship to beneficiaries – while resources are still available. In ideal situations, new entrepreneurs should have broken even by the time a project is closing out as that would assure higher levels of sustainability. Short funding cycle projects could be implemented as top ups or complementary initiatives supporting a longer-term initiative. Another short-term supplementary grant could still be beneficial as it would usher the previous project into a new level and apply the lessons learnt. Government resources however, may be the most strategic as they are not bound by strict funding timelines. If short grants such as the Japanese Supplementary budget is the only available option, then ILO would need to rethink the delivery model for faster project delivery and more especially focus on managing key risks. One way would be to leverage existing PROs and structures early in the project and have them run most of the activities. In this Limpopo project, EWASA came on board relatively late. A future short project could also focus on one outcome area, with fewer outputs and activities, parallel instead of sequential activity implementation, prioritising high impact aspects e.g. enterprise set up, capacitation and growth first, then policy integration and scaling later. Other ways include front loading key activities (early staff recruitment or temporary deployment of staff from other projects to activate the project while recruitment ensues, advance planning on procurement e.g. obligation free prequalification of vendors, local sourcing (in the municipalities) of equipment/materials where possible and preselection of partners and potential beneficiaries.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen gender transformative and inclusion elements

Addressed to: ILO Gender Team, Project Managers | **Priority:** High | **Resources:** Low-Medium | **Timing:** Ongoing / Design stage

There is room to scale up gender dimensions beyond representation and equitable distribution of project benefits, to actively using the project platform to address norms, power dynamics, unfair gender roles and GBV. The latter has been declared a national disaster. This type of project, with the necessary intentionality and dynamic gender and inclusivity programming can have tangible effects on the status of women and lift marginalized and ostracized persons, like informal waste collectors. Creating e-waste technicians out of women, in a mostly male dominated space, is by itself a positive step in enhancing gender roles and pulling more women from the reproductive gender role sphere to the productive and community service sphere.

Embed GBV prevention and awareness, childcare considerations, accessibility audits, and realistic equity targets (e.g., meaningful 30–40% women with strong support measures) from the design stage in all future similar projects.

Recommendation 4: Mainstream e-waste into municipal policy and planning

Addressed to: ILO Technical Unit, LEDET, DFFE, Municipalities | **Priority:** High | **Resources:** Medium | **Timing:** Medium-term

This is work in progress and while some municipalities have a clear road map to ensure this integration, others are not. This could be actively followed up because it has positive implications for sustainable attention to e-waste, not tied to a project but as part and parcel of municipal authorities' responsibility in line with existing laws and policy guidelines. It is an essential first step towards future budget allocation for such programmes. It will also support the sustainability aspects of this projects policy and systems objective. Support LEDET, DFFE, and municipalities to fully integrate e-waste guidelines and decent work principles into IWMPs, bylaws, and performance plans, including dedicated budget lines and jobs and awareness targets for 2026–2027 and beyond. In a nutshell, ILO's technical support cannot end with this project. Some work remains to be done in providing ongoing technical support and advocacy towards this end.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen TVET and institutional capacity for long-term skills supply

Addressed to: ILO, TVET Colleges, Department of Higher Education | **Priority:** Medium–High | **Resources:** Medium | **Timing:** Medium-term

One of the most promising aspects of the ILO E-Waste Project was its engagement with TVET colleges. However, this engagement remained relatively light and project-bound. The evaluation found that while the project succeeded in building immediate skills among the 22 beneficiaries, the long-term supply of skilled youth into the e-waste sector will depend on institutionalising training within local training providers. Without this, the project risks becoming a one-off intervention rather than a catalyst for systemic change. Formalise partnerships with TVET colleges to roll out accredited short courses on e-waste/recycling, and establish them as ongoing training providers and incubation hubs, for new cohorts. The training model used in the project for both entrepreneurs and TVET based lecturers is not sustainable and at the same time, TVETs appear ready to curate courses in e-waste management – an opportunity worth exploring further. A project just focused on this could be a catalyst to mainstreaming e-waste management in TVET education.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference Final Independent Evaluation of ILO E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

South Africa, despite being an upper-middle-income country, faces an urgent e-waste crisis driven by rapid digitalisation since the COVID-19 pandemic, inadequate recycling technology, and deep structural inequalities. Economic recovery has been slow, increasing pressure on government social protection systems. The situation is particularly acute in Limpopo Province, which experiences persistently high unemployment. In early 2024, Limpopo's official unemployment rate stood at 32.7%, with the largest gap nationally between official and expanded unemployment rates, highlighting severe labour market exclusion. E-waste poses serious environmental and public health risks. According to the World Health Organization, toxic substances such as lead and mercury found in e-waste contaminate land and water, threatening neurological development in children and affecting respiratory health. South Africa generates approximately 6.2 kg of e-waste per person annually, yet only about 12% is properly recycled. Due to limited infrastructure, much e-waste ends up in landfills or is burned in communities, exposing vulnerable populations to hazardous toxins. The rapid increase in electronic device use, accelerated by remote work during COVID-19, has intensified this challenge.

Although South Africa has enacted Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation requiring producers to collect e-waste, effective implementation is constrained by the lack of advanced recycling technology and infrastructure. There is an urgent need for sustainable e-waste management systems, including the introduction of advanced technologies, particularly through international partnerships. In Limpopo Province, e-waste management systems are relatively underdeveloped, and informal practices such as backyard dismantling, open dumping, and mixing with general waste remain common. These practices expose workers and communities to toxic materials, impede environmental sustainability, and represent a lost opportunity to capture value from materials recovery. The combination of a high volume of unmanaged e-waste, limited collection infrastructure, and weak market linkages constrains the development of a formal e-waste value chain that could support safer work and sustainable livelihoods, particularly for youth. This context underscores the dual rationale for targeted interventions in Limpopo: strengthening systems that support effective e-waste management and creating pathways to employment and entrepreneurship for youth, women, and vulnerable groups within a greener circular economy.

1.2 ILO E-Waste For Youth Employment In Limpopo Province Project

The E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province project is implemented by the International Labour Organization in partnership with national, provincial, and local stakeholders. The project seeks to address the intersecting challenges of high youth unemployment and weak e-waste management systems by promoting a greener and more inclusive circular economy approach within the province. The project is funded by the Government of Japan through its Supplementary Budget and is implemented over a 12-month period from April 2025 to March 2026. It adopts a systems-oriented approach that combines policy and institutional strengthening with practical skills development, enterprise support, and market linkages. The intervention targets youth, with a particular focus on women and persons with disabilities, while also engaging public institutions, TVET colleges, municipalities, and private sector actors within the e-waste value chain.

The project is structured around two interrelated outcome areas. The first focuses on strengthening the e-waste management system through improved policy coordination, regulatory implementation, occupational safety and health guidance, and the development of collection and aggregation mechanisms at local level. The second focuses on enhancing youth employability and entrepreneurship through technical training in e-waste recycling and upcycling, business development support, and facilitated access to markets for youth-led enterprises. The theory of change is presented in **Annex I**

2. Objectives & Scope of the Evaluation

2.1 Objective of the Evaluation

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of its projects and interventions. The evaluations are conducted to achieve accountability, improve management and foster learning to support the knowledge base. The aim of this final evaluation is to assess the overall implementation and achievements of the Project in Limpopo Province, South Africa against their planned objectives. It will provide evidence-based information on what worked and what did not work well and why and whether the underlying theories and assumptions used to design and implement interventions to support environmental sustainability and enterprise development are relevant, effective and achieved their intended goals. This evaluation mainly intends to provide information on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project on E-waste, as well as document lessons learnt and emerging good practices in the area enterprise development and decent work.

2.1.1 Specific Objectives

More specifically, the final evaluation of E-Waste Project should:

1. Assess the relevance of the project's design and implementation strategies in relation to the relevant ILO, UN and national development frameworks (i.e. SDGs and UNSDCF) of South Africa and final beneficiaries' needs.
2. Review and substantiate emerging evidence related to the achievements of the project's goals and its contribution to the environmental sustainability and enterprises development.
3. Assess the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives and expected results, while identifying the supporting factors and constraints that have led to them, including strategies and implementation modalities chosen, partnership and coordination arrangements.
4. Identify unexpected positive and negative results of the Project.
5. Assess the level of implementation efficiency of the intervention.
6. Assess the extent to which the project's outcomes and observed impacts will be sustainable in the respective geographical coverage.
7. Identify lessons learnt and emerging good practices for the key stakeholders, including ILO in Africa, to guide its efforts in supporting E-Waste management.
8. Provide strategic recommendations for the Project Team, the ILO, the Project Partners, the Donor, and different key stakeholders to promote sustainability and support further development, as well as to inform the design of future similar interventions of the ILO in support to environmental sustainability and job creation.

2.2 Evaluation Audience

The primary users of this final evaluation include the ILO Technical Unit, the Pretoria Country Office, ROAF, the Government of South Africa Government at national, regional and local level, and the Government of Japan. Other users are the Japanese Technology Companies, technical and education institutions and Workers and Employers organizations.

2.3 Evaluation Scope

2.3.1 Period and Scope of the Evaluation

The final clustered and independent evaluation will cover the full implementation period of the intervention (as outlined in Table 1). The evaluation will also assess the attainment of all intervention's outputs, outcomes and objectives as described in the logical frameworks. The evaluation will also integrate gender equality as a cross-cutting concern throughout its processes and methodological approach and deliverables (in line with EVAL guidance note n° 4), as well as tripartism, social dialogue and transition to environmental sustainability as transversal themes.

2.3.2 Geographical Scope

The final evaluation will cover the Limpopo Province in the Republic of South Africa where the Project was implemented, including any particularly targeted zones and areas as outlined in the project document.

2.4 Evaluation Criteria and Key-Questions

The evaluation should be carried out in adherence with the ILO Evaluation policy and guidelines, as well as UNEG norms and standards. It should, as well, be guided by the OECD/DAC main evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) in addition to ILO cross-cutting criteria. The final evaluation will be guided by the following main evaluation questions, to be refined during the evaluation design and planning stage:

Relevance & Strategic Fit – Is the Project addressing the right issues?

1. To what extent is the ILO E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project aligned to the needs and priorities of tripartite stakeholders and beneficiaries identified in the project documents and during implementation?
2. How well does the Project support national development commitments, regional priorities, and relevant SDGs?
3. To what extent are the interventions' objectives aligned with the socioeconomic realities and specific challenges of South Africa?
4. Did the projects' design reflect a logical, realistic, and purposeful approach toward achieving their objectives in different national contexts?

Coherence - How well does the Project fit within the broader context?

5. How well does the project complement and align with other ongoing ILO programmes and projects in the respective Province and across the Country?
6. Are there any overlaps, synergies, or potential duplications with other donor-supported projects or national programs?
7. To what extent has the project been designed to maximize systemic and sustainable changes at national and regional levels?
8. How well are the interventions aligned with national policy frameworks, regional priorities, and international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals and ILO frameworks and guidelines?
9. How effectively does the project collaborate with other donors, partners, and stakeholders across the Limpopo Province to ensure coherence?

Effectiveness - Are the interventions achieving their intended results?

10. To what extent is the project likely to achieve their intended objectives by the end of the implementation period?
11. Has the project been effective in addressing youth unemployment and improving environmental management in Limpopo Province, South Africa?
12. What are the key success factors and challenges encountered in achieving the expected outcomes?
13. Has the Project followed its Theory of Change, and have the assumptions and development hypotheses been validated by performance data?
14. Has the project achieved its targeted outputs and outcomes equitably across geographic area and for intended beneficiaries (e.g., women, youth, informal workers)?
15. What unexpected results, both positive and negative, have emerged from the project?

Efficiency - Are resources being used optimally?

16. How effective was the technical support and backstopping provided by ILO's Decent Work Teams (DWTs) and headquarters?
17. How efficiently have the financial, human, and technical resources been allocated and utilized across the Project to achieve their objectives?
18. Have project funds and interventions been delivered in a timely manner, and what were the key bottlenecks encountered in implementation?
19. Could similar results have been achieved with fewer resources or through alternative approaches?
20. Has the project adequately incorporated gender and inclusion objectives within their budgeting and planning processes?
21. Has an effective risk management, monitoring, and evaluation system been established and implemented across the Project?

Impact Orientation - What difference has the project made?

22. How has the Project contributed to long-term improvements in the lives of beneficiaries, particularly women and youth?
23. What tangible changes has the project brought at the policy and practice levels in terms of governance, technical capacity on e-waste and access to decent work?
24. To what extent has the project contributed to broader national, regional and global development goals?
25. What evidence exists of the project's contributions to strengthening local institutions, social partners, and governance systems?
26. What lessons can be drawn from the impact of the project to inform ILO future e-waste projects and interventions?

Sustainability - Will the benefits last beyond interventions' completion?

27. To what extent are the project's results structured to ensure long-term sustainability beyond their lifecycle?
28. How effectively has the Project built local ownership, institutional capacity, and stakeholder commitment to sustain their outcomes and impacts?
29. What are the main risks to the sustainability of the project's achievements, and how have these risks been mitigated?
30. To what extent are national institutions and implementing partners prepared to sustain the outcomes without continued ILO support?
31. Have realistic and effective exit strategies been developed and implemented to ensure ongoing benefits for beneficiaries and partners?
32. Will the project's beneficiaries, such as women and informal workers, continue to experience improved employment and enterprise development support after the end of ILO support?

Cross-Cutting Issues

33. To what extent did the project mainstream gender equality and non-discrimination principles into its design and implementation?
34. How effectively did the project promote strong and independent worker and employer organizations and facilitate constructive social dialogues?

3. Evaluation Approach and Modalities

3.1 Evaluation Methodology

The final evaluation of ILO E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project should comply with evaluation norms and standards, ethical safeguards, specified in ILO's evaluation procedures and guidelines (see Annex II). The ILO adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation norms and standards, as well as to the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards. This is a final independent evaluation and as such, the final methodology and evaluation questions will be determined by the successful consultant in consultation with the Evaluation Manager.

The evaluation is expected to apply a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data to address the evaluation questions and triangulating data sources and methods to increase the validity and rigor of the evaluation findings. The evaluation should also be participatory, engaging, as much as feasible, with the key stakeholders of the interventions in the Limpopo Province, South Africa at all stages of the evaluation process (See Guidance Note 7 in Annex II). The bidding consultants are encouraged to propose innovative approaches and methods to allow the evaluation to rigorously assess the interventions' results and impacts in Limpopo Province, to derive holistic and integrated lessons learnt on the support to E-waste management even as it relates to both employment and environmental management South Africa, as well as to formulate strategic and actionable recommendations to guide ILO future interventions on the thematic area.

The evaluation should use, but not be restricted to, the following methods:

- **Desk Review:** Of the E-Waste Project's documentation and literature, including the projects' documents, progress reports, monitoring reports, financial reports, relevant associated research and studies, and any other documentation related to the interventions. The evaluator should also conduct a brief literature review on E-Waste Management for decent work processes and best practices in Africa and globally, as a benchmark against which the interventions design and implementation strategies should be assessed. Preliminary findings from the desk review will be used to refine the evaluation scope, questions and methodology.
- **Interviews with the Main Stakeholders:** Remote or in-person interviews will be conducted with ILO relevant staff in South Africa, as well as with the interventions' partners, beneficiaries and key stakeholders in the Limpopo Province. Interviews will also be conducted with ILO specialists on Employment Intensive Investment Programmes, Skills and Enterprise Development at the DWT/Country Office. The list of stakeholders to consult as part of the evaluation will be consolidated by the evaluation manager in consultation with ILO staff in the CO, and the evaluator will be tasked with performing any relevant sampling exercise to optimize the data collection process.
- **Quantitative Monitoring Data:** Collected by the ILO management throughout the implementation of the Project. The evaluator should analyse any available such data at the country-level and triangulate the conclusions with the findings from qualitative sources to strengthen the evaluation validity and credibility.

3.2 Evaluation Process

The evaluation will be conducted and managed as per the following process:

1. **Inception Phase:** An inception meeting will be organized by the evaluation manager after the completion of the hiring process of the evaluation consultant and the finalization of the contract. The meeting will gather the ILO Project manager, the evaluator and the evaluation manager, and will be the opportunity to refine the evaluation scope and questions, to discuss its methodological aspects, as well as to clarify its logistical details. At the end of this phase and following the desk review and preliminary interviews with relevant ILO staff, the evaluator will submit an **inception report** detailing the evaluation plan, including its methodological approach, its data collection tools and its timelines. The evaluation Inception Report is to be approved by the evaluation manager.
2. **Data Collection Phase:** During which the evaluator will deploy the agreed evaluation approach, including the data collection activities with the identified evaluation respondents. Most interviews and other forms of consultation with the stakeholders will be conducted remotely; however, the evaluator will specify in the methodological approach if field visits in Limpopo Province are justified and necessary.

3. **Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop:** To be virtually organized by ILO staff and facilitated by the evaluator, gathering the main stakeholders in Limpopo Province, south Africa. During the consultation workshop, the evaluator will present the preliminary findings of the evaluation, explore the evaluation stakeholders' interpretation of the early findings and recommendations, and gather further information with the stakeholders to narrow any data or knowledge gap related to the evaluation questions.
4. **Reporting Phase:** After the completion of the evaluation data collection and interpretation, the evaluator will submit a draft evaluation report, to be reviewed and circulated by the evaluation manager to consolidate feedback and comments from the evaluation main stakeholders. A final report will be, subsequently, submitted by the evaluator addressing the stakeholders' feedback, before being subjected to quality control as per ILO evaluation guidelines and quality standards by the evaluation manager, the ILO Regional M&E and ILO EVAL/HQ. The final report should be ultimately validated and approved by EVAL/HQ.

3.3 Evaluation Management

The final evaluation will be managed by an ILO approved Evaluation Manager not linked with the interventions and implemented by a selected independent evaluator, following a transparent selection process. The roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process will be as follow:

The Evaluation Manager: Will be responsible for the overall management of the evaluation process, ensuring that the evaluation is conducted as per its ToRs and initial plans and that its final deliverables are up to ILO quality standards. More specifically, the evaluation manager will:

- Finalize the evaluation ToRs with inputs from key stakeholders.
- Select the independent evaluator in coordination with EVAL.
- Review and approve the inception report.
- Brief the evaluator on ILO evaluation policies, guidelines and procedures.
- Coordinate with ILO CO teams on the data collection logistics.
- Review and circulate the first draft of the evaluation report for comments by the key stakeholders.
- Ensure the final version of the evaluation report addresses stakeholders' comments and meets ILO requirements.
- Approve the draft version of the evaluation report and submit it to EVAL for final approval.

The ILO Country Teams: Will provide any logistical assistance to the evaluator as may be required and will be responsible for:

- Providing relevant and necessary documentation on the Project interventions to the evaluator.
- Preparing a list of recommended interviewees.
- Coordinating logistical arrangements during the data collection phase.
- Reviewing and providing comments on the draft evaluation reports.
- Organizing and participating in the stakeholder consultation workshop.

The Selected Evaluator: Will be responsible for conducting the evaluation as per ILO evaluation guidelines and quality standards. More specifically, s/he will be responsible for:

- The design of appropriate and targeted evaluation approach and methodology, as well as their associated data collection tools and schedule.
- The conduction of appropriate and agreed on data collection activities, ensuring a proper participation of the evaluation stakeholders and its main respondents.
- The facilitation of a virtual stakeholders' consultation workshop to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation and facilitate a discussion around the evaluation recommendations and lessons learnt.

- The submission of draft and final evaluation reports in line with ILO evaluation guidelines, quality standards and templates as outlined in Annex II.
- Address and integrate feedback and comments received on the evaluation outputs.

3.4 Evaluation Deliverables

The selected consultant is required to deliver the following evaluation outputs:

Inception Report: Including a detailed evaluation approach, a detailed work plan and the associated data collection instruments. The inception report should follow ILO EVAL Checklist 3 and include:

- Description of the evaluation methodology and instruments to be used in sampling, data collection and analysis;
- Data collection tools;
- Detailed fieldwork plan (virtual or in person) in consultation with the Evaluation Manager and ILO country teams;
- Agenda for the stakeholders' workshop;
- The proposed evaluation report outline.

The inception report will be reviewed and approved by the evaluation manager after being circulated to the evaluation stakeholders for their comments.

Draft and Final Evaluation Reports: In English (maximum 30 pages, excluding), strictly following ILO template (Annex I) and ILO/EVAL Checklist 5 "Preparing the Evaluation Report "(Annex II). The evaluator will submit a draft evaluation report to the evaluation manager, who will have approximately seven days to consolidate both his/her comments on the analytical strength of the report, its findings, lessons learnt and recommendations, as well as comments and feedback from the evaluation stakeholders. Once the stakeholders feedback on the draft report is shared with the evaluator, he will have seven to ten days to address all comments before sending a final draft evaluation report.

The evaluation manager will again review the final evaluation report, before sharing it with the ILO Regional Evaluation Specialist for quality review. Once the final evaluation report is deemed satisfactory by the ILO Regional Evaluation Specialist, it will be submitted to EVAL/HQ for a final quality review. **The evaluation report will be considered as final after its review and validation by EVAL/HQ**, and the selected evaluator should be available to address comments and feedback at each step of the quality assurance process.

- **Evaluation Executive Summary:** To be appended to the final evaluation report, following ILO template (Annex II).

4. Evaluation Timelines

The evaluation process should start mid-February 2026, after the finalization of the evaluation contract, and last approximately **23 days**. The evaluation will be conducted following the below approximate schedule:

Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Number of days consultant	Approximate Dates
Inception Meeting with the evaluator and the ILO teams	Evaluation Manager	One week after the signature of the consultancy contact.	1 day	Mid-February 2026
Desk Review; Preliminary Interviews Deliverable: Inception Report	Evaluator	Two weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	3 days	End of February 2026
Field-work Data Collection (remotely and/or in-person)	Evaluator	Three weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	9 days	Early-March 2026
Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop (remote)	Evaluator	Five weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	1 day	Mid-March 2026

Draft Evaluation Report	Evaluator	Six weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	5 days	End of March 2025
Consolidated feedback on the draft evaluation report	Evaluation Manager	Seven weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	-	Early April 2026
Final version of the evaluation report	Evaluator	Nine weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	3 days	Early-April 2026
Total working days			23 days	

5. Evaluation Budget & Required Qualifications

5.1 Payment schedule and modalities

The consultancy for this final evaluation shall commence mid-February 2026 and conclude no later than end of March 2026 after which the contract will expire. The ILO standards for payment is output-based and payments will be made upon the submission and approval of deliverables as outlined in section 3.4 of the present ToRs. Payments will be made following the below schedule:

- 20% for Inception Report;
- 30% for Draft Evaluation Report, and;
- 50% for the Final Evaluation Report along with the Evaluation Executive Summary.

A budget for this evaluation has been allocated to cover the evaluator's fees, potential costs of international and domestic travels and the organization of the consultation workshop with stakeholders. The evaluation budget includes:

- Fees for the evaluator for **23 non-consecutive workdays**. The bidding consultant should provide, as part of their financial proposal, daily fees in US dollars.
- Cost of international travel, if relevant, from the evaluator's home to South Africa. In accordance with the relevant ILO rules, the ILO will provide pre-paid air tickets in economy class and by the most direct route.
- Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) during the field mission, if relevant. The ILO will pay DSA at the standard UN rate for the dates of the trips to cover lodging, meals and incidentals while on travel, as per ILO policy.
- Cost of the consultation workshop organization.

A detailed budget and contract with the evaluator will be prepared by the ILO Pretoria Country Office.

5.2 Evaluator Required Experience and Qualifications

The independent evaluator will be selected following a selection process managed by the Evaluation Manager and based on proven experience and qualifications meeting the consultancy requirements. Selection will be based on the following criteria:

- A master's degree in any of the following, social sciences, development studies, economics, or other related graduate qualifications.
- A minimum of 5-7 years of professional experience specifically in evaluating international multi-country (ies), development or capacity-building initiatives, including UN projects/programmes, and with policy level work and institutional building related work.
- Experience in qualitative and quantitative approaches applied to evaluation including survey design and reporting.
- A good understanding of ILO mandate and tripartite structure.
- Experience in facilitating workshops to present and discuss evaluation findings.
- Have no previous or current involvement – or offers of prospective employment – with the ILO in the relevant country.

- Knowledge and previous experience on environmental management and skills development for decent work in South Africa will be an asset.
- Fluent English and French, both spoken and in writing.

Appendix 2: List of Persons Interviewed

	Name	Entity	Designation	Email	Mode of Interview
1.	Ms Sharon Mogomotsi	DFFE (national)	Director	smogomotsi@dffe.gov.za	Virtual
2.	Mr Tshepho Maselela	LEDET (Limpopo provincial)	Deputy Director - PSC chair	maselelat@ledet.gov.za	Virtual
3.	Mr Phuti Mabotha	LEDET (Limpopo provincial)	Sekhukhune Coordinator	mabothaPJ@ledet.gov.za	Virtual
4.	Mr Lazarus Tlomatsana	LEDET (Limpopo provincial)	Waterberg Coordinator	TlomatsanaML@ledet.gov.za	Virtual
5.	Ms Maggy Machumele	Tzaneen Municipality	Solid Waste Division Manager	maggy.machumele@tzaneen.gov.za	Virtual
6.	Mr Lwaleng Kanyane	Lepelle Nkumpi Municipality	Waste Manager	lwaleng.kanyane@lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za	Virtual
7.	Ms Rendani Kutama	Musina Municipality	Environment & Parks Manager	rendanik@musina.gov.za	Virtual
8.	Mr Sakhile Sithole	EWASA	Program Management Officer	sakhile@ewasa.org	Virtual
9.	Ms Lindelwe Holo	EWASA	Program Management Officer	Lindelwe@ewasa.org	Virtual
10.	Mr Thabiso Hlongwane	Lepelle Nkumpi LM	Project beneficiary	hlongwanet@greenerpasturesrc.co.za	Virtual
11.	Mr Ndatedzo Ramovha	Makhado LM	Project beneficiary	movha@wasteaside.co.za	Virtual
12.	Ms Sweetness Mathabathe	Makhuduthamaga LM	Project beneficiary	ditlouewastemanagement@gmail.com	Virtual
13.	Mr Christopher Madaba	Musina LM	Project beneficiary	Unknown (telephone)	Virtual
14.	Mr Madisha Lehlakoane	Mogalakwena LM	Project beneficiary	Unknown (telephone)	Virtual
15.	Ms Alphina Lesiba	Lephalale LM	Project beneficiary	Unknown (telephone)	Virtual
16.	Ms Xiluva Makhubele	Greater Tzaneen LM	Project beneficiary	Unknown (telephone)	Virtual
17.	Mr Emmanuel Miyambo	Collins Chabane LM	Project beneficiary	Unknown (telephone)	Virtual
18.	Mr Takatso Ramano	Modimolle-Mookgophong LM	Project beneficiary	Unknown (telephone)	Virtual
19.	Mr Kabelo Motlokwa	Greater Letaba LM	Project Beneficiary	Unknown (telephone)	Virtual
20.	Ms Cebisile Nyambe	ILO Ewaste Project	Project Manager	nyambe@ilo.org	Virtual

21.	Mr Thomas Nkosi-Dlamini	ILO Ewaste Project	Finance Officer	dnkosi@ilo.org	Virtual
22.	Mr Darryl Crossman	ILO Ewaste Project	M&E Officer	crossman@ilo.org	Virtual
23.	Mr Alexio Musindo	ILO DWT/Country Office	Director	musindo@ilo.org	Virtual
24.	Mr Sibanda Gamelihle	ILO DWT/Country Office	Technical Specialist	gama@ilo.org	Virtual
25.	Ms Ida Chimedza	ILO DWT/Country Office	Gender Specialist	chimedza@ilo.org	Virtual
26.	Mr Mmese Molepo	Thambazimbi TVET	Lecturer	molepomf@letcol.co.za	Virtual
27.	Mr Tukudi Senong	Waterberg TVET	Deputy Principal	dpcs@waterbergcollege.co.za	Virtual
28.	Ms Kumiko Higuchi	Embassy of Japan in South Africa	Second Secretary	kumiko.higuchi@mofa.go.jp	Virtual

Appendix 3: Evaluation Questions Matrix

Criteria	New Consolidated Question	Measures / Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholders / Informants	Analysis & Assessment
Relevance	1. To what extent is the project aligned with stakeholder needs, national/regional priorities, SDGs, and the socioeconomic realities of South Africa	Alignment with DWCP, UNSDCF, SDGs, national development priorities; stakeholder needs addressed;	Project documents, DWCP, UNSDCF, national development plans, stakeholder consultations	Desk review, structured interviews, focus groups	Stakeholders, project staff, PSC	Triangulation of policy alignment, stakeholder validation
	2. SQ: Does its design reflect a logical and purposeful approach?	Design appropriateness	Project documents; project team interview	Desk review, interviews	Project staff; ILO technical specialists	Logical framework analysis
Coherence	3. How well does the project complement other frameworks/partnerships/initiatives (ILO, donor-supported initiatives, national, regional, international frameworks) to ensure coherence?	Evidence of synergies, avoidance of duplication, alignment with ILO/global frameworks, collaboration	Project reports, donor coordination notes, national policy frameworks	Desk review, key informant interviews	Donor representatives, ILO staff, government officials	Comparative analysis of overlaps/synergies & mapping of partnerships

Criteria	New Consolidated Question	Measures / Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholders / Informants	Analysis & Assessment
		mechanisms				
	4. To what extent has the project been designed to maximize systemic and sustainable changes at national and regional levels?	Evidence of systemic change strategies, institutional reforms, policy integration	Project design documents, national/regional policy frameworks	Desk review, interviews	Policy makers (DFFE, LEDET), ILO technical specialists	Assessment of systemic change pathways, sustainability potential
Effectiveness	5. To what extent has the project achieved its intended objectives, particularly in addressing youth unemployment, environmental management, and equitable outcomes for beneficiaries?	Achievement of project indicator targets	Progress reports, monitoring data, beneficiary surveys	Desk review, surveys, interviews	Youth beneficiaries, women, informal workers, project staff	Triangulate project indicator results with survey/KII interviews
	6. What key factors, challenges and TOC constructs have influenced achievement of expected outcomes?	Success factors identified, challenges documented, ToC assumptions validated	Project ToC, monitoring reports, evaluation notes	Desk review, interviews, workshops	Project team, stakeholders, beneficiaries	Thematic analysis of success/challenges, validation of ToC assumptions
	7. What unexpected results, both positive and negative, have emerged from the project?	Documented unintended outcomes	Monitoring reports, beneficiary feedback	Interviews, focus groups	Beneficiaries, project staff	Identification and categorization of unintended effects
Efficiency	8. How efficiently have technical, financial, and human resources been allocated, utilized, and delivered?	Resource allocation efficiency, timeliness of delivery, adequacy of technical support	Financial reports, HR reports, ILO support documentation	Desk review, interviews	Project managers, ILO DWTs, HQ staff	Cost-effectiveness analysis, timeliness assessment
	9. Could similar results have been achieved with fewer resources or alternative approaches?	Evidence of alternative approaches, comparative	Project reports, benchmarking with other	Desk review, expert interviews	ILO specialists	Counterfactual analysis, efficiency benchmarking

Criteria	New Consolidated Question	Measures / Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholders / Informants	Analysis & Assessment
		resource use	similar projects			
	10. To what extent did the project integrate gendered/inclusive planning, budgeting, risk management, and M&E systems?	Gender mainstreaming indicators, inclusion measures, existence of gendered risk/M&E systems	Project design, budgets, M&E framework	Desk review, interviews	Project staff, gender specialists, M&E officer	Gender/inclusion analysis, review of risk/M&E systems
Impact Orientation	11. How has the project contributed to long-term improvements for beneficiaries, policy/practice changes, and broader development goals?	Beneficiary livelihood improvements, policy changes, contribution to SDGs	Beneficiary surveys, policy documents, project reports	Surveys, interviews, desk review	Beneficiaries, policymakers, social partners	"Impact" assessment, contribution analysis
	12. What evidence exists of strengthened institutions and governance systems, and what lessons can inform future ILO e-waste projects to maximise impact?	Institutional strengthening indicators, governance improvements, lessons learnt	Institutional reports, project documentation	Desk review, interviews	Local institutions, social partners, ILO staff	Institutional capacity analysis, lesson extraction
Sustainability	13. To what extent has the project built local ownership, institutional capacity, and prepared national partners to sustain outcomes beyond ILO support?	Evidence of ownership, institutional capacity, readiness of partners	Project reports, stakeholder feedback	Interviews, desk review	National institutions, implementing partners	Capacity assessment, sustainability readiness analysis
	14. What are the main risks to sustainability, and how have they been mitigated through exit strategies?	Risk identification, mitigation measures, exit strategies implemented	Risk registers, project reports	Desk review, interviews	Project staff, partners	Risk analysis, mitigation effectiveness assessment
	15. What is the probability that beneficiaries will continue to experience improved employment	Evidence of continued support, beneficiary	Beneficiary surveys, follow-	Surveys, focus groups	Beneficiaries (women, youth, informal	Beneficiary-level sustainability

Criteria	New Consolidated Question	Measures / Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholders / Informants	Analysis & Assessment
	and enterprise development support after ILO support ends?	perceptions	up reports		workers)	assessment
Cross-Cutting Issues	16. To what extent did the project mainstream gender equality and non-discrimination principles into its design and implementation?	Gender mainstreaming indicators, non-discrimination measures	Project design, monitoring reports	Desk review, interviews	Gender specialists, beneficiaries	Gender equality assessment
	17. How effectively did the project promote strong worker/employer organizations and facilitate social dialogue?	Strengthened organizations, evidence of dialogue mechanisms	Project reports, stakeholder feedback	Interviews, focus groups	Worker/employer organizations, social partners	Organizational capacity analysis, dialogue effectiveness assessment

Appendix 4: Revised evaluation timeline

This workplan is based on the extended evaluation period ending 31st May 2026.

Phase	Activities	Who	Dates	Deliverables	Notes	Deliverable milestones
Inception and Preparation	Desk review of project documents; Refine methodology, design data collection tools, develop sampling strategy, fieldwork plan, and compile Inception Report	Evaluation Team	12-18 March 2026	Inception Report	3 working days provision for ILO review & comments	1st Milestone (by 24 March 2026)
	Receive and address comments on Inception Report & Tools	Evaluator; ILO team	24 March 2026	Final approved Inception report & tools (by 24 March)		
Data Collection	Introduce evaluator, finalize interview appointments	ILO Team	25-27 March 2026	Initial appointments	3 working days provision for ILO team to finalize interview appointments	2nd Milestone (by 16 May 2026)
	Transfer/create approved online surveys on MS Forms & share link	Evaluation Team	25 March 2026	Survey links shared. Close online forms by 5th April		
	Evaluator’s follow up and conduct virtual KIIs + continued desk research	Evaluation Team	27 March – 8 May 2026	Raw data (transcript, notes)	Conducting interviews based on stakeholders’ availability. Last interview on 8 th May.	
Data Cleaning and Analysis	Analyze quantitative and qualitative data; Apply AI-leveraged sentiment analysis; Synthesize findings.	Evaluator	4-10 May 2026	Preliminary findings presentation and workshop agenda		
Reporting and Validation	Draft Evaluation Report and receive initial comments	Evaluator, ILO Project team support	16 May 2026	Half day virtual workshop	3-4 days for ILO review & feedback	
	Present findings to project steering	Evaluator	27 May 2026	Draft Report		

Phase	Activities	Who	Dates	Deliverables	Notes	Deliverable milestones
	committee					
Final submission	Consider comments and incorporate them in eval report + summary	Evaluator	28-29 May 2026	Resubmission & respond to final inputs		Final Milestone (by 30 May 2026)

Appendix 5: Data Collection Tools

1. Key Informant Interview Question (KII) Guide

Target Audience: ILO Staff, Government Officials (National/Provincial/Local), Private Sector Partners, PSC.

Informed Consent Statement

*My name is XXX and I have been contracted by ILO to conduct an end of project assessment of the e-waste project in which you participated. The aim is to learn more about the project so that we can better understand people's experiences and improve future similar projects. Taking part is completely voluntary. You don't have to answer any question you don't want to, and you can stop me at any time. What you share will be kept private and used only for this assessment. Your name or personal details will not appear in any reports so as to protect your privacy and confidentiality. While you may not benefit directly by participating in this interview, your views will help shape efforts to advance e-waste management. Do you agree to take part in this interview? **{Note: If NO, participant is thanked and conversation is ended}. If Yes, thank participant and explain you have some questions to guide the conversation and then start the interview.***

Relevance & strategic fit

- From your experience, what gaps or challenges in e-waste management was this project addressing? **{probe for how interviewee rates the criticality of those gaps as critical}**
- To what extent in your view did the project address the most critical e-waste and unemployment challenges in Limpopo Province?

Coherence

- From what you know how effectively did the project synergize with other similar initiatives [by ILO] {by national/provincial or municipality initiatives}?
- Give me specific examples of synergies (or lack thereof) that you witnessed between this project and other initiatives?

Effectiveness

- In your view, what were the most significant achievements (if any) that were made in the area of policy or systems for e-waste management? **{If any, probe for what enabled that}.**
- Similarly, what were the most significant achievements made in the youth economic empowerment? **{If any, probe for what enabled that}.**
- ILO staff/Implementing partners: What major bottlenecks hindered the achievement of planned outputs, and how were they addressed?

Efficiency

- In your assessment, what alternative implementation modality could also be used for projects as this one that compares to or is more cost effective? **{probe for a brief explanation of answer}**
- ILO staff: How much averagely did it cost the project to train and start up a recycling business
- ILO staff: If a similar project was to come up, what would you do differently in terms planning and budgeting to give the project better value for money?

Impact & Sustainability

- What significant improvements or changes (if any) have you witnessed since this project started? **{probe by asking "Tell me a bit more about ..."}.**

- As the project is now ending, what is your assessment on the preparedness of partners like provincial government, municipalities, districts, TVETs etc to sustain the project results without further ILO support?

Cross cutting themes

- Give me some practical actions (if any) that you are aware of [or the project took] to ensure gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusiveness in access to this project's benefits.

2. Key Informant Interview Question Guide (45-60 mins)

Target audience: Beneficiary youths

Informed Consent Statement

*My name is XXX and I have been contracted by ILO to conduct an end of project assessment of the e-waste project in which you participated. The aim is to learn more about the project so that we can better understand people's experiences and improve future similar projects. Taking part is completely voluntary. You don't have to answer any question you don't want to, and you can stop me at any time. What you share will be kept private and used only for this assessment. Your name or personal details will not appear in any reports so as to protect your privacy and confidentiality. While you may not benefit directly by participating in this interview, your views will help shape efforts to advance e-waste management. Do you agree to take part in this interview? **{Note: If NO, participant is thanked and conversation is ended}. If Yes, thank participant and explain you have some questions to guide the conversation and then start the interview.***

Ice breaker question: When did you start your e-waste recycling business? Have you always done this or are doing it for the first time?

Relevance & Effectiveness

- Have you always wanted to start a business in e-waste recycling or how did this idea come about? **{Probe for whether ILO project played a role-useful also in attribution analysis}**
- Do you feel the business development support you received actually prepared you to run an enterprise? **Give me details for your answer**
- I understand that you are already running the business. What were the biggest challenges you faced while trying to access the e-waste market?

Impact prospects

- Has your participation in this project led to a change in your household income or employment status and if so, in what ways?
- You've completed training in recycling and running a recycling business as a beneficiary of the project. What are two things you learnt through this training or from your participation in the ILO project that you didn't know before?

Cross-Cutting Issues

- **(For Women/PWDs):** Did you feel the project provided a safe and inclusive environment for you to learn and work? **{ask for details}**
- What "unexpected" benefits (positive or negative) have you experienced since joining the project?

Sustainability

- Between high, moderate, and low confidence, how confident do you feel in terms of your ability to continue your business without ILO support? Tell me a little more why you say that **{note the specific level of confidence and probe why}**
- Are you now part of any local associations or networks that help you stay connected to the e-waste value chain? Which ones? **{get actual names}**

Closing: *We have now come to the end of the interview. Do you have any other additional information you may wish to give me or questions to ask?*

3. Key Informant Interview Question Guide (45-60 mins)

Target audience: TVETs that ILO partnered with

*My name is XXX and I have been contracted by ILO to conduct an end of project assessment of the e-waste project in which you participated. The aim is to learn more about the project so that we can better understand people's experiences and improve future similar projects. Taking part is completely voluntary. You don't have to answer any question you don't want to, and you can stop me at any time. What you share will be kept private and used only for this assessment. Your name or personal details will not appear in any reports so as to protect your privacy and confidentiality. While you may not benefit directly by participating in this interview, your views will help shape efforts to advance e-waste management. Do you agree to take part in this interview? **{Note: If NO, participant is thanked and conversation is ended}. If yes, thank participant and explain you have some questions to guide the conversation and then start the interview.***

Relevance

- Briefly walk me through how the ILO e-waste training programme aligns with your TVET college's core curriculum and greening initiatives?
- In what ways has partnering with the ILO project made your training more relevant to Limpopo's local economic and environmental challenges [*like high unemployment and waste issues*]?

Coherence

- How well did the topics that ILO wanted taught fit with your curriculum?

Effectiveness

- What changes (if any) have you seen in e-waste management ever since trainings were offered?
- Have you registered any increase in the demand for training on e-waste recycling business and related courses?

Efficiency

- How much did it cost cost-effective was delivering the ILO e-waste training through your TVET—did the resources and time invested match the benefits?

Impact

- What broader effects has the training had on beneficiaries, such as improved livelihoods through e-waste jobs or reduced environmental harm in areas like Tzaneen or Collins Chabane?

Sustainability

- How is the TVET ensuring the e-waste training continues post-ILO funding, perhaps through your own business model or further partnerships?
- What challenges remain in scaling it up for ongoing capacity building?

Closing: *We have now come to the end of the interview. Do you have any other additional information you may wish to give me or questions to ask?*

4. Online Survey (10-15 mins)

Target audience: Recipients of awareness creation

Thank you for participating in this short survey about e-waste management awareness in your community. It should take 10-15 minutes. Your responses will help evaluate local campaigns via gatherings, radio, and social media that were sponsored by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Responses are anonymous. Contact {ILO project email} incase of any questions related to this survey.

1. In which municipality do you live?

- Greater Tzaneen
- Collins Chabane
- Other (please specify): _____

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

3. What is your age range?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or older

4. What is your highest level of education?

- No schooling
- Primary school
- Secondary school (Matric)
- Post-Matric certificate/diploma
- University degree
- Postgraduate degree
- Other (please specify): _____

5. Have you heard or received information about e-waste management or e-waste policies in your community (e.g., through meetings, radio, or social media)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

6. If yes to Q5, where did you first learn about e-waste awareness efforts? (Select all that apply)

- Physical community gatherings
- Radio broadcasts
- Social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram)
- Posters/flyers
- Friends/family
- Other (please specify): _____

7. What is the main message you remember from the e-waste awareness activities?

8. On a scale of 0-10, how much do you know about proper e-waste handling now compared to before these awareness efforts? (0 = Nothing, 10 = A lot) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Likert scale)

9. What should people do with old electronics like phones, computers, or TVs instead of throwing them in general waste? (Select the best options)

- Take to designated recycling points
- Store at home
- Burn them
- Sell to collectors
- Donate
- Don't know
- Other (please specify): _____

10. Do you know where to take e-waste for safe disposal or recycling in your area?

- Yes
- No

11. If yes above, please name the location or contact: _____

12. Before these awareness efforts, did you see e-waste as just "rubbish" to throw away?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

12. Now, do you view e-waste as a potential business opportunity (e.g., for recycling, jobs, or income)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

13. On a scale of 1-10, how likely are you to properly dispose of or recycle your electronic waste in the future?(1 = Not at all likely to dispose e-waste properly, 10 = Very likely to dispose e-waste properly)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Likert scale)

14. Any other thoughts on the e-waste awareness campaigns or changes in your views?

Thank you for completing the survey!

Appendix 6: Lessons Learnt

LESSON LEARNT ELEMENT	Project duration
Brief description of lesson learnt (link to specific action or task)	One-year project duration is too short for meaningful enterprise development in the e-waste sector. The project demonstrated that developing viable, formal e-waste recycling businesses is a complex process that involves multiple stages: technical skills training, business registration, obtaining regulatory licences, securing working capital, establishing market linkages, and achieving operational stability. Because the project was only 12 months long (with actual implementation closer to 9 months), most of the 22 supported youth enterprises were still in the early establishment or pre-revenue phase at closure. While skills and initial setup were achieved, full business maturation, consistent income generation, and sustainable operations could not be realized within this short timeframe.
Context and any related preconditions	The compressed timeline, combined with startup delays, meant that many beneficiaries were still in the early establishment or pre-revenue phase at project closure. Licensing, market linkages, and operational scaling require more time than was available. Both implementers and partners repeatedly highlighted that a minimum of 2–3 years would be needed for this nature of projects to allow consolidation and sustainable results.
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	Future project designers for a follow up, new or replicate project in Limpopo or in another province.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	The challenge with a short project timeframe is rushed implementation in a sector that requires wide liaison, capacity strengthening, mentorship and coaching support. These are best done when project resources (funds, time, experts) are still available to consolidate gains and close out when benefits are properly entrenched.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Networks and partnerships with key stakeholders with a mandate in e-waste management -gives hope that benefits will be sustained
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Longer project design or use short funded projects as part of a broader already funded initiative.

LESSON LEARNT ELEMENT	Infrastructure and working capital
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Brief description of lesson learnt (link to specific action or task)	Infrastructure and working capital gaps severely limit the translation of training into viable businesses. While technical and business training was largely successful, the absence of reliable transport, adequate storage, weighing scales, and capital to purchase e-waste (rather than relying on donations) appear to be key constraints to collection volumes and income generation. Starting capital (cash) in addition to equipment/infrastructure can be an essential catalyst especially for those starting from scratch.
Context and any related preconditions	Due to project duration constraints, by project closing, some of the beneficiaries had not yet received all the infrastructure and equipment with the common ones yet to be delivered being containers (for some) and weighing scales for most. The evaluation notes the elaborate plan between ILO and EWASA to have these delivered. However, some beneficiaries especially those doing this work for the first time, cited a lack of funds to procure e-waste in communities where donations were not forthcoming to be a key challenge. A key lesson here is that material and financial support go together in truly kickstarting such enterprises especially for those with kick-off challenges.
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	Future project designers for a follow up, new or replicate project in Limpopo or in another province.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	The challenge with an inability to raise capital to procure e-waste from communities can stifle the infant business until a time when the entrepreneur has gained sufficient goodwill from the community to acquire items for free or at favorable prices.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	With working capital, the business is given early inertia, as young entrepreneurs establish networks that would enable them to acquire e-waste items freely or at minimal prices.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	This is a project design and budgeting issue.

LESSON LEARNT ELEMENT	Regulatory/Compliance Processes
Brief description of lesson learnt (link to specific action or task)	Regulatory compliance processes, particularly obtaining the SAPS Second-Hand Goods Licence and hazardous waste storage/transport permits, are major bottlenecks that must be proactively addressed during project implementation for e-waste enterprises. This is because it is essential to ensure business are compliant before full operations.
Context and any related preconditions	The e-waste sector in South Africa is highly regulated due to the hazardous nature of materials and the risk of illegal trading. These licences are mandatory for legal buying, selling, storage, and transportation of e-waste. ILO and other project funders would avoid being part of uncompliant operations.
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	Youth entrepreneurs supported by the project, particularly the 22 beneficiary enterprises and their cooperatives.

Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Only 29% of beneficiaries obtained the SAPS licence and 10-19% secured hazardous waste licences by project end. This delayed business operations, limited revenue generation, and increased the risk of informal/illegal activities.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The project successfully raised awareness on compliance requirements and supported one key compliance i.e. CIPC registrations (76% achieved). Strong partnerships with LEDET and EWASA helped some beneficiaries make progress on licensing.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Though ILO did not have much control over the one-year funding cycle, the compressed implementation timeline did not allow adequate project presence during regulatory processes to ensure 100% compliance hence a lesson for the future in terms of how much activities to allocate in a one-year project.

LESSON LEARNT ELEMENT	Type of support per beneficiary
Brief description of lesson learnt (link to specific action or task)	Differentiated support is required for a heterogeneous beneficiary cohort.
Context and any related preconditions	Beneficiaries had varying levels of prior experience, economic situations, and geographic locations.
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	Youth entrepreneurs with different starting points (novices vs. those with some recycling experience).
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	A one-size-fits-all support package led to uneven outcomes. Some beneficiaries progressed quickly while others struggled significantly.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The project successfully identified and trained a diverse group across 22 municipalities, including strong participation of women. Such diversity can allow them to learn from each other.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	This is a project design aspect. Future projects should include stronger segmentation and customized mentoring packages.

LESSON LEARNT ELEMENT	Partnerships for sustainability
Brief description of lesson learnt (link to specific action or task)	Strong municipal and institutional relationships are foundational for sustainability, but they must be translated into concrete operational commitments.
Context and any related preconditions	Local government (municipalities and LEDET) plays a critical role in licensing, land allocation, waste management planning, and ongoing support. They are key allies to continuity if they have bought into the idea.
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	Youth enterprises and the broader e-waste ecosystem in Limpopo especially the municipalities.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	While relationships with municipalities were positive, they lacked binding commitments (e.g., dedicated budgets, clear collection routes/routines, documented plans for mentorship and for scaling up this model etc)
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The Project Steering Committee and MoUs with LEDET and EWASA created strong ownership and integration into some municipal IWMPs.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Greater emphasis should be placed during implementation on formalizing handover agreements, exit strategies, and concrete post-project support mechanisms, with some lead time set aside to observe these agreements working before project closure e.g. the last 6 months of the project. This warrants longer project life.

Appendix 7: Best Practices

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Strategic container placement combined with community awareness campaigns
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Strategic placement of e-waste collection containers in high-traffic, accessible locations (e.g., near taxi ranks and residential areas) combined with targeted community awareness campaigns. This practice directly supported project goals of increasing e-waste collection volumes, formalizing recycling, and creating viable youth enterprises.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Worked well in both urban and rural municipalities in Limpopo. Requires coordination with municipalities for land/space allocation. Replicable where local authorities are willing to provide public space, but less effective in very remote areas with poor road access.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	Well-positioned containers + awareness campaigns → easier access for the public → increased voluntary donations of e-waste → higher collection volumes and business viability for youth entrepreneurs.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Significantly improved collection efficiency for several beneficiaries (notably in Greater Tzaneen).
Potential for replication and by whom	High potential for replication in other projects and/or locations. Can be led by municipalities, LEDET-type departments, or ILO-supported projects in partnership with local government.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Contributes to DWCP Priority 1 (more and better jobs, especially for youth) and Just Transition / Green Jobs agenda under ILO's Strategic Programme Framework. Supports circular economy and formalization of the informal economy.
Other documents or relevant comments	

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Deliberate gender mainstreaming through targeted selection (60% women) and women-led cooperative formation
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Intentional targeting of women (achieving 45% participation in a male-dominated sector) combined with the formation of women-led cooperatives. This went beyond quotas to promote collective action and solidarity among female entrepreneurs.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Effective in a context where waste management is traditionally viewed as “men’s work.” Requires strong municipal support during beneficiary selection and continuous gender-sensitive mentoring. Applicability is high in sectors with strong gender imbalances.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	Targeted selection + cooperative model → increased women’s participation and confidence → shared solutions to common challenges (e.g., transport costs) → greater empowerment and business resilience for women entrepreneurs.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Because a target had been set, municipalities reported having put the best effort to bring female beneficiaries, where possible and within the limited time they had to identify beneficiaries. The good practice is in setting the target as it introduces intentionality. Although 60% was not achieved, 45% in traditionally male oriented roles is good gain.
Potential for replication and by whom	Highly replicable in other green jobs and circular economy projects. Best implemented by ILO, government partners, and TVET institutions with deliberate gender strategies.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)	Directly supports SDG 5 (Gender Equality), DWCP gender mainstreaming, and ILO’s cross-cutting policy on gender equality and non-discrimination.
Other documents or relevant comments	Noted as a strong example of intentionality

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Holistic training model combining technical skills, business development (SIYB/GYB), and direct industry exposure (facility visits)
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Integrated training approach that combined hands-on technical training (safe dismantling, sorting, grading), entrepreneurship training using ILO's SIYB/GYB tools, and practical exposure through visits to established recycling facilities in Johannesburg.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Requires access to experienced industry players (e.g. EWASA members) and sufficient project budget for study visits. Most effective when technical and business training are delivered in a sequenced and practical manner.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	Comprehensive training (technical + business + exposure) → rapid acquisition of relevant skills and confidence → ability of beneficiaries to operate compliant businesses and adapt to real market conditions.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Beneficiaries reported high confidence in technical and business skills. Strong transformation in personal knowledge and agency.
Potential for replication and by whom	Very high replication potential. Can be adopted by TVET colleges, other ILO projects, and government skills development programmes across South Africa.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Aligns with DWCP skills development and youth employment outcomes, ILO's Green Jobs Programme, and the Decent Work Agenda for Africa. Supports transition to a circular economy while creating decent work.
Other documents or relevant comments	Consistently praised by beneficiaries and partners as "practical" and "life-changing" during interviews.

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