

ON-CAMPUS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Waste Management

Opportunity description

The University of Pretoria is a major generator of general waste (recyclable waste, food and garden waste). The removal and disposal of general waste is regulated through the National Environmental Management Waste Act (Act 59 of 2008). The University is, however, also managing the removal and disposal of general waste as it is a responsible corporate citizen and we aim to minimise the carbon footprint of the University by means of a responsible waste management solution.

Resource recovery (e.g. recycling, composting), if properly conceived and implemented, can reduce the financial impact of waste collection and disposal services. For example, the separation of recyclable materials (such as paper, glass, metals, and plastics) at a source of generation leads to a reduction in the quantities of waste, which the University would otherwise have to transport and dispose of at a landfill. When the recycling started in 2016, approximately 10 different commodities were extracted during recycling, and currently approximately 12 (of a possible 17) main commodities are being recycled.

The mixed waste stream of the University typically contains in the order of 20% to 30% (by weight) of potentially recyclable inorganic materials. As the waste management initiatives improve, consumption patterns change and an increase can be expected in the percentage of recyclable materials in the waste. Thus, savings in disposal costs may be available in the future if additional quantities of recyclable materials are recovered and marketed. In addition, the segregation and processing of the organic matter in waste can make a sizeable contribution to the reduction of quantities requiring ultimate disposal, since organic matter typically constitutes 50% to 60% of the residential waste stream. The organic matter (garden waste and organic food waste) is better addressed in the new general waste removal and recycling contract for 2019 to 2023.

When this project started at the University, 11 people were employed through Waste Group Projects to sort the waste. With the new contract with Waste Group Projects, 23 individuals are currently employed, who are responsible for the sorting of the various recyclable commodities. This is a substantial growth in terms of job creation and the targets with the current contract will increase over the next five years.

Impact

Since 2017, when recycling commenced, the aim of the contract has been to improve recycling with the secondary aim to improve the University's carbon footprint (sustainability).  
  
2019 (to date): Over the past three years, a noticeable improvement has been made in the methodology and approach to recycling on the various campuses. These changes resulted in a remarkable improvement in recyclables being retrieved from the main waste stream.

Community partner

Waste Group Projects does training of staff and communities to make them more aware of waste separation and recycling. This training entails both in-house and external components at an accredited facility. Courses are being developed for waste awareness and separation; this course will be accredited through SETA and learners will receive CPD points as they progress with the courses. Eventually, any individual (community members) interested in starting a waste-related company will have access to these courses.

Below are a few of the projects that Waste Group Projects are supporting in the community:

- Meadowlands U/17 Football Tournament
- Waste Group Projects funds the whole tournament and the main aim of this is to help youngsters to stay off the streets (alcohol and drug abuse).

- Also, in this event all the older “grannies”, as they call them, from the same community receive food parcels.
- Waste Group Projects also sponsor bursaries for students to study growth in the community.
- Waste Group Projects also sponsor the Soweto TV website, design, development and running of the website.

