

# Transformative Action to End Open Burning of Waste

## Africa Roadmap and Kisumu City Action Plan

**Lessons from Kisumu City for local authorities to lead efforts to end open burning of waste**

**41%**  
**of households**

worldwide dispose of their waste in an uncontrolled manner, either openly dumping or burning

**Estimated up to**  
**90%**  
**of waste**

of waste in Africa is openly dumped or burned

### Context

Across Africa, open burning and uncontrolled dumping of waste remain urgent challenges with catastrophic impacts on human health, the environment, and climate. Nearly 1.2 million premature deaths are caused every year in Africa by air pollution to which open burning of waste is one of the primary contributors. Open burning of waste is responsible for an estimated 11% of global black carbon emissions, causing respiratory diseases, cancers and premature deaths, and accelerating climate change.

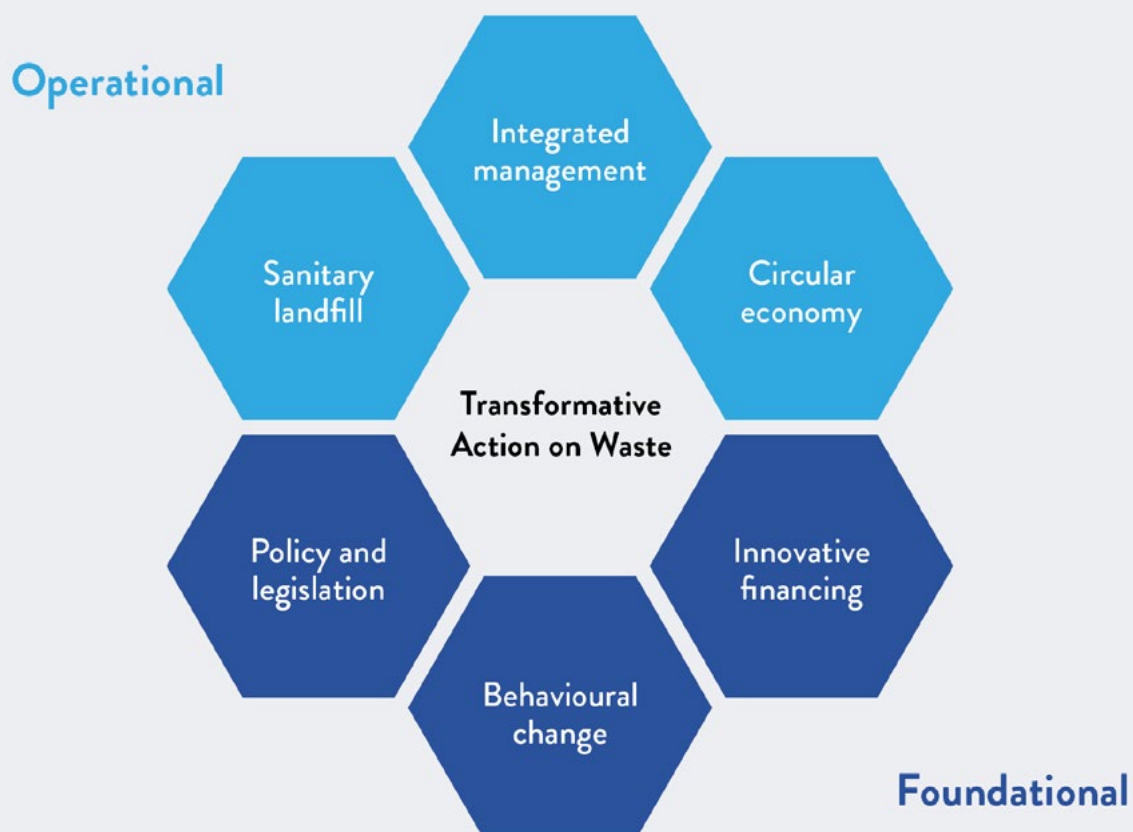
### Political mandate and regional commitment

The Africa Roadmap on Transformative Action to End Open Burning of Waste identifies the key actions to address the systemic deficiencies in waste management and promote waste to resource conversion that could generate multiple social, economic and environmental benefits. In 2025, the African Ministerial Conference on Environment endorsed the Roadmap, calling on all African national governments and local authorities to take concrete actions to implement the Roadmap.

## The Roadmap is split into sections, highlighting:

- **why** we should all take urgent action to respond to the waste crisis and end open burning,
- **what** action needs to be taken by national governments, local authorities and finance institutions, in the form of the transformative action framework and
- **how** these actions can be implemented.

## Transformative Action Framework



## Kisumu City Action Plan

The Africa Regional Roadmap was piloted in Kisumu City, Kenya to create a local transformational action plan and share lessons with the region. Using a multi-stakeholder approach led by Kisumu City, the plan outlined specific actions under eight objectives aligned with the Regional Roadmap's transformative framework, grouped into three categories.

- **No-cost Actions:** Actions which can be paid for by using existing County budgets or through spending by other stakeholders from their existing budgets
- **Low-cost Actions:** Actions which require new and additional budgets, but below the levels that could be funded through major investment bids
- **Investment Actions:** Actions which will require significant investments through a combination of public funds, grants, low-interest loans and other financial instruments

Based on the lessons learned and the Regional Roadmap, the recommended actions for local authorities to take transformative action in the waste sector are:

## Overarching approach

- Adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to developing the plan by involving all the relevant stakeholders including the informal waste service providers and waste pickers.
- Ensure that the process is fully led by the City
- Keep it positive by giving primary considerations to alternatives and benefits followed by enforcement
- Keep it people-centred: ensure people get the services they need, and integrate the informal sector

## Policy and legislation (example: objective 7, Kisumu City Action Plan)

Addressing gaps in policy and legislation is a priority for local authorities and should include:

- Translating national policy into local by-laws and action plans through community participatory approaches with measures to address open burning
- Setting local targets and timelines, aligned with national waste management acts and plans
- Integrating informal waste service providers by establishing rules to expand of waste collection services in under-served neighbourhoods.
- Building enforcement capacity once affordable, reliable alternatives to open burning are in place, including
  - » Environmental surveys and community policing
  - » By-law enforcement with penalties
  - » Logistical support (vehicles, staffing)
- Enhancing local data collection to feed into national systems

## Behaviour change (examples: objective 3 and 4, Kisumu City Action Plan)

Achieving behavioural change both at the institutional and individual level is critical.

Key recommended actions include:

- Raise public awareness of the health impacts from open burning of waste.
- Invest in targeted behaviour change campaigns that reach all segments of the city, especially women and children, and reflect local contexts.
- Support local champions and community sensitisation teams, working through Health and Education Departments, to reach community health volunteers, schools, and traditional and religious leaders.
- Recognise the critical contribution of waste pickers and include waste pickers in planning for behaviour change and system infrastructure.

## Financing (examples: objective 8, Kisumu City Action plan)

A significant financial gap for waste infrastructure limits actions at the local authority level. Recommended actions to address this include:

- Prioritise waste management in local authority budgets
- Reinvest revenue from waste collection into waste management systems, where fund structures allow.
- Include resource mobilisation in local waste management action plans
- Support enterprise growth and access to finance of formal and informal private sector waste handlers to increase capacity for collection and waste valorisation.
- Advocate for increased national budget allocations for waste infrastructure and systems
- Seek support to tap into financial mechanisms through UNFCCC, NDCs and national Development Finance Institutions to fund waste management initiatives

The foundational pillars outlined above should be implemented in parallel to drive progress in the waste sector. Complementary operational actions are context-specific and should be selected based on local characteristics. These actions are detailed in Section 5.3.2 of the Roadmap and include sanitary landfills, integrated waste management systems, and circular economy approaches. For examples of specific actions for Kisumu City, refer to Objectives 1, 2, 5 and 6 in the Kisumu City Action Plan.

