Transformative Action to End Open Burning of Waste

Africa Roadmap and Kisumu City Action Plan

Recommendations for finance institutions to support increased investment into inclusive, safe and sustainable, waste management systems.

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.

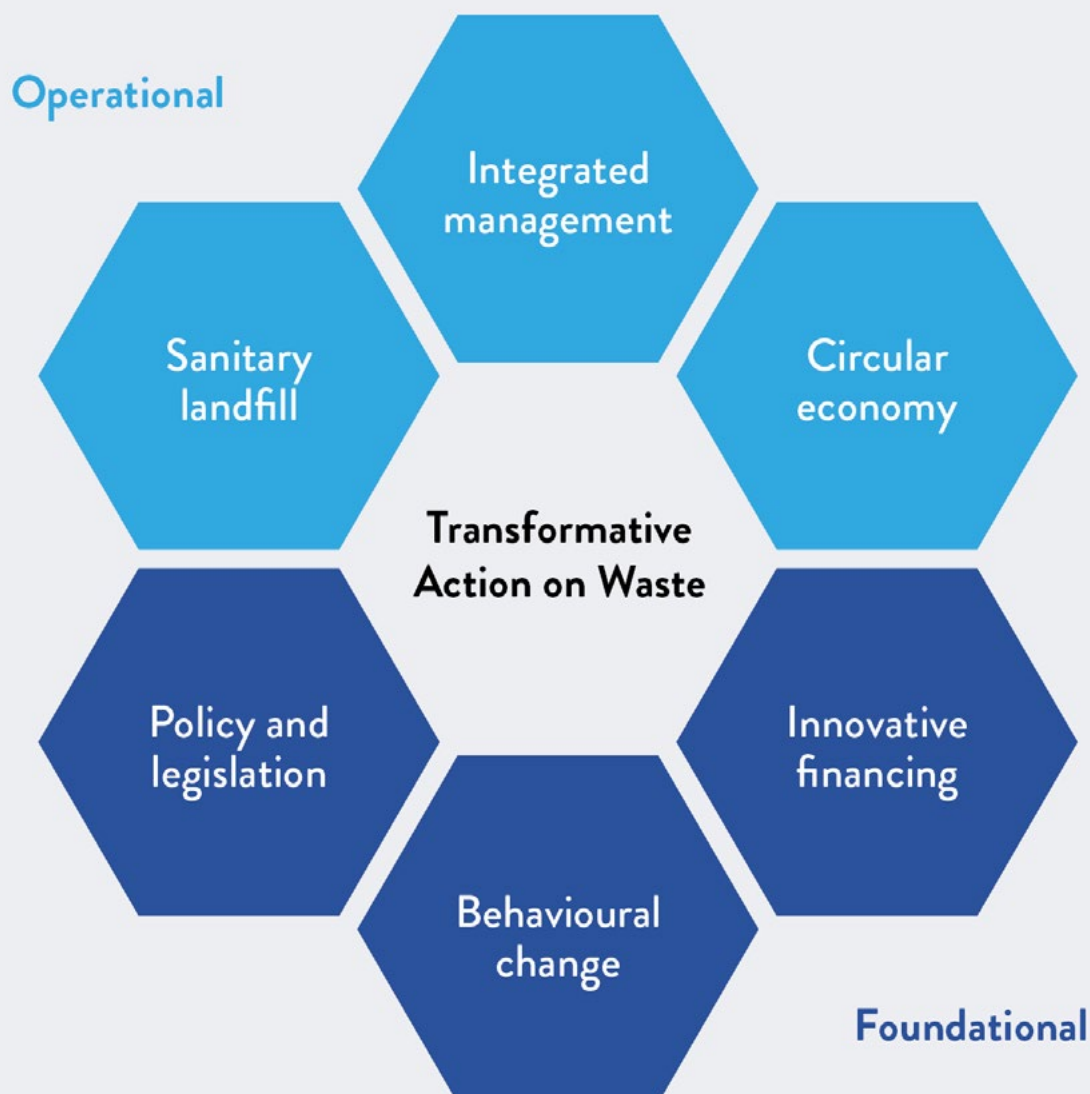## Political mandate and regional commitment

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.

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 Kisumu City Action Plan outlines specific actions under eight objectives aligned with the Regional Roadmap's transformative framework, grouped into three categories: no cost, low cost and investment.

Transformative Action Framework

Operational

Integrated management

Sanitary landfill

Circular economy

Transformative Action on Waste

Policy and legislation

Innovative financing

Behavioural change

Foundational

Finance institutions, especially national development finance institutions, are critical enablers of the Transformative Action Framework, detailed in section 5.3 of the Roadmap. Local authorities mainly hold the responsibility for waste management services in African countries with very limited budgets, and while no cost and low cost actions can be undertaken, the infrastructure needed requires investment.

The recommended actions for finance institutions are:

- Prioritise waste management in funding decisions, recognising it as an overlooked but vital issue that when addressed contributes to progress on all of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Invest in private and social enterprises engaged in generating economic value from waste and creating jobs through waste recycling facilities.

- Finance initiatives to increase waste data and information available to support further proposals for larger scale initiatives.

- Ensure that inclusivity of waste pickers from design to implementation is a pre-requisite for funding.

- Create funding instruments that support capacity building and behaviour change components alongside infrastructural investments.

- Build in-house capacity and knowledge on different integrated waste management system solutions to ensure that selected infrastructure is context appropriate.

- Promote public-private partnerships and municipal bonds to fund large scale infrastructure and services.

The foundational pillars of the transformative action framework are to be taken in parallel to act in the waste sector, the complementing operational actions are then context dependent and should be selected based on the specific characteristics of the area. The operational actions are detailed in section 5.3.2 of the Roadmap including, sanitary landfill, integrated waste management systems and circular economy approaches.