

AFRICAN CIRCULAR
ECONOMY ALLIANCE

Discussion on the
merits and
challenges of
harmonizing pan-
African
rPET standards

January 2024



Agenda

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The urgency of the plastic pollution issue

03

Challenges in developing a Pan-African rPET standard

05

Mobilizing all stakeholders for a cleaner future

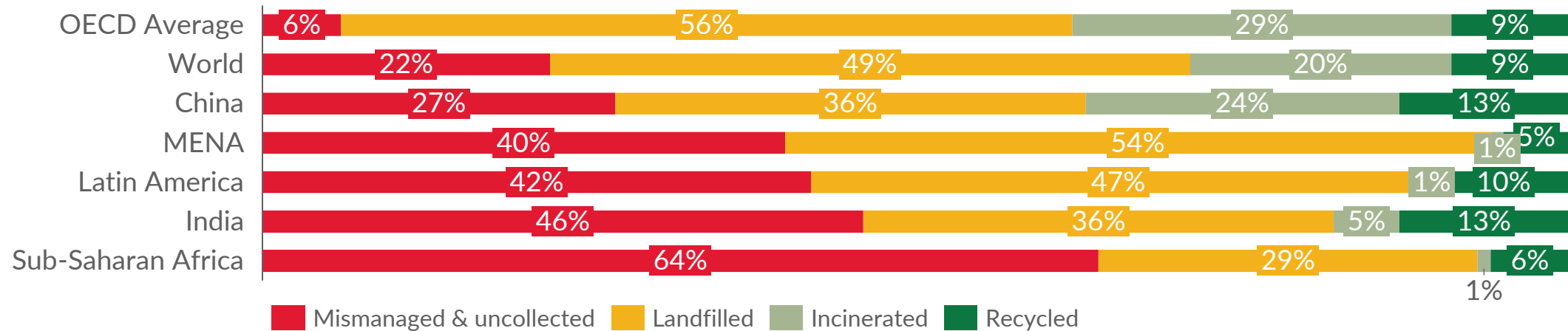
02

Merits of a Pan-African food-contact rPET standard

04

Fostering regional cooperation towards a continental rPET standard

The urgency of the plastic pollution issue



- 64% of plastic waste is mismanaged or left to contaminate the environment, exceeding the global average of 22%.
- Some African countries such as Mauritius, Morocco and Nigeria have independently established key policies and technical standards, including rPET standards, to address plastic waste and encourage sustainable plastic usage.
- However, these individual efforts, particularly in rPET standards, may create disparities and trade tensions, impacting recycling practices and the quality of recycled materials across borders. Variations can impede cross-border collaboration and worsen the plastic pollution crisis.

The establishment of a continental rPET standard for food-contact applications could represent a pivotal policy intervention in the fight against plastic pollution.

Five merits of a Pan-African food-contact rPET standard

Harmonized regional value chain



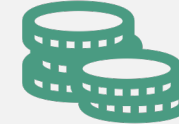
Developing a regional value chain for plastics recycling, enabling Africa's recyclers to build economies of scale and global competitiveness.

Plastics reduction and circularity



Reduction of virgin plastic consumption and waste generation and enabling plastic circularity and pollution reduction.

Economic opportunities



Opening doors for innovation, job creation, and economic resilience. Potential reduction of expenditure on the importation of plastics.

Social benefits



Empowering informal waste pickers, transforming their role into a formalized and sustainable part of the recycling infrastructure.

Boosting intra-Africa plastics trade



Facilitating the trade of recycled materials bolsters economic integration, fostering prosperity across borders.

In the quest to mitigate plastic pollution and pave the way for sustainable development, a continental food-contact rPET standard is highly promising.



Six challenges in developing a Pan-African food-grade rPET standard

Crafting a regulatory framework



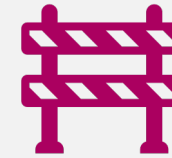
Negotiating and balancing diverse interests to create a harmonized and effective standard.

Feedstock availability



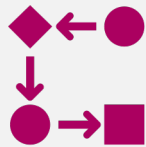
Establishing robust waste collection systems to optimize plastics recovery and feedstock availability.

Policy and logistics barriers



Addressing plastic trade policies and logistical barriers for efficient transboundary plastics trade.

Coordinating the value chain



Aligning manufacturers, recyclers, retailers, and consumers for a sustainable approach.

Building capacity



Developing human capital and industrial capacity aligned with circular economy principles and needs

Shifting behavior



Fostering a culture of responsible consumption and green procurement through awareness programmes.

By overcoming these challenges together, African countries can create a legacy of environmental stewardship, economic prosperity, and sustainable development.



Six African countries have crafted or begun crafting their rPET standards



Ghana

The Ghana Standards Authority is currently in the process of drafting technical standards related to rPET production and use.



Kenya

The Kenyan Plastics and Plastic Products Technical Committee is drafting, a standard – DKS 2987:2023 - that outlines acceptance criteria for food-grade rPET resin in food packaging.



Mauritius

The Mauritian Standard (MS 250:2021) for post-consumer PET bottle (specifications for food-grade PET recyclates and preforms) was published in February 2021.



Morocco

The Moroccan Government is revising Law 28-00 Article 5 which currently forbids the use of rPET in food grade contact packaging.



Nigeria

Nigeria's Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) and stakeholders in the food industry collaborated to develop a standard that provides mandatory guidelines for food-grade rPET production.



South Africa

SANS 1728 Standards is published by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) regarding measures relating to rPET and plastic recycling.

This progress highlights the momentum building across the continent, emphasizing the need for alignment.



Regional cooperation is needed to achieve a continental rPET standard

Knowledge exchange and best practices

Sharing successes, challenges, and virtuous practices. For instance, through a continental knowledge-sharing platform under the African Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA).

Coordinated policies and regulations

Harmonizing standards, implementing bans, and setting recycling targets. Approximately 30 African countries have banned single-use plastic bags.

Joint research and innovation

Collaboratively exploring advanced recycling technologies and waste management strategies.

Strengthened resource sharing

Efficiently allocating funds for recycling infrastructure, waste management, and education. E.g., PETCO, is a successful initiative for efficient resource sharing and impactful waste management.

Cross-border monitoring and enforcement

Collaborating on effective systems to track waste flows and protect our ecosystems.

Advocacy on the global stage

Presenting a united front to champion international efforts against plastic pollution.

By working together to combat plastic pollution through regional collaboration, African countries could demonstrate to the world the power of unity in the face of a common challenge.



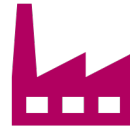
Mobilizing all stakeholders for a cleaner future

In this transformative journey to reshape Africa's relationship with plastic, every stakeholder has a role to play.



Governments and policy makers

Governments, including intergovernmental bodies like the African Union, regional trading blocks and regional regulatory bodies like ARSO hold the power to enact policies that promote a circular economy and sustainable plastics management.



Industries and businesses

Industries and businesses involved in food packaging can drive innovation by investing in and adopting recycled materials, particularly rPET.



Collaborative partnerships

Governments, industries, communities, and international organizations must unite in a shared commitment to combat plastic pollution.

The imperative for a Pan-African food-grade rPET standard resonates across countries, industries, and communities. It's a call to transcend borders, overcome challenges, and reshape Africa's relationship with plastic.



THANK YOU

Q&A session

