

POLICY BRIEF

Integrated Solid Waste Management in Nairobi City County: The Social Enterprise Framework

An accelerating rate of waste generation in Nairobi has made provision of SWM services and installation of sites and facilities a major challenge for the City County Government. This policy brief describes the underlying problem and proposes an approach for achieving sustainable SWM in the city.

SUMMARY

Various legal and policy instruments at the municipal, national and international levels have stipulated the rationale and strategies for implementing sustainable Solid Waste Management (SWM) systems. However, unsustainable SWM prevails in Nairobi, just like in many other cities in developing countries. A situation analysis of SWM in Nairobi particularly in slums and other low income areas observed inadequate collection of waste from source points, haphazard disposal, reduced waste recovery and lack of support mechanisms to drive recycling. Weak linkages across different activities in the chain and a centralized-rigid administrative framework for SWM also impedes an efficient SWM system in the city. In order to achieve a sustainable and integrated SWM system, the Nairobi City County Government (NCCG) needs to adopt a Social Enterprise Framework comprising of a business model for each SWM activity, adequate planning for SWM sites and facilities, devolved governance and decentralized procurement for SWM.

1. Situation Analysis

In absence of SWM services and facilities from NCCG particularly in slums and low income areas of the city, **waste collection and**

disposal services are provided through community based initiatives and other self-help efforts. In the course of undertaking these activity, individuals and groups encounter many challenges. Among them, the individuals and CBOs experience environmental apathy by community members, low subscription to their service and minimal returns from their work. Lack of waste holding facilities and transfer stations, infective transportation of waste to the city dumpsite, and disruption of their service by one-off government interventions such as the National Youth Service (NYS) slum cleanup also affect the performance of informal waste collection initiatives.

Waste pickers work in unhygienic, sometimes inhumane conditions as most of the waste they seek to recover is highly contaminated and disposed in insanitary locations.

Middlemen who act as the link between waste pickers and recyclers experience ineffective market linkages with recyclers and face harassment from police due to sensitive nature of some of the materials they deal in.

Recyclers who operate informally, observed that many activities in recycling which include washing, sorting, shredding etc. are labour intensive leading to high production costs. They contend with unreliable supply of electricity, limiting their production time. Electricity tariffs are also not favorable for recycling. Waste processing technologies they use are also outdated for recycling operations, which coupled with poor working conditions exposes workers to various occupational hazards.

Governance of SWM

The centralized governance framework based at counter headquarters is not favorable for SWM as many administrative process may not address the realities on the ground.

The underlying issues

The problems in governance and across the SWM activities that were discerned from the baseline survey can be classified into three. These are ineffective business models for different activities, lack of planning for sites and facilities and a rigid governance for SWM.

2. Recommendations

In cognizance of the community collective nature of SWM and the integral social linkages involved across the different activities, a **Social Enterprise Framework** was selected as the best approach for achieving a sustainable SWM system in the city. In developing the social enterprise framework, the issues and challenges observed at the various levels of the value chain were considered. Suggestions made by various actors on how they want to

be supported by NCCG and other stakeholders to make improvements in their SWM enterprises were also incorporated.

A Social Enterprise Framework for SWM will encourage the general community and community based groups to participate at different levels of the value chain which will consequently increase competitiveness and efficiency in SWM. The SEF for SWM should entail the following components:

(ii) Social enterprise business model

A solid waste management process that promotes social enterprises need to incorporate key SWM activities including waste segregation, collection from source points, sorting, material recovery, processing of waste to products and transportation of unrecyclable waste to a sanitary land fill. Each of this activity should have its unique business model and support mechanisms which among other things should comprise providing assistance to vulnerable groups to form and register community based SWM social enterprises across the value chain, fostering linkages among the key activities and capacity development in management and technical issues in each level of activity.

(ii) Spatial planning

Spatial plans for SWM facilities need to be developed at the ward and sub-county levels on the basis of their unique attributes including demographics, different land-use systems, economic activities, land and soil characteristics, infrastructural facilities such as roads, railway line etc. and natural features

such as rivers. These include (semi) permanent or mobile waste holding points in residential and commercial areas, sub-county transfer stations, composting facilities, sub-county recycling innovation hubs and sub-county waste to energy plants. A participatory site selection before establishment of facilities and co-management of facilities between NCCG and community based SWM social enterprises should also be embraced.

(iii) Decentralized governance and procurement

Decentralized framework should aim at taking governance and procurement functions from the county headquarter to the sub-counties where key stakeholders will be involved in key decisions with respect to spatial planning, governance and procurement for SWM. A decentralized framework for SWM in the city should be structured as shown in the figure below

