



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

# NATIONAL **RECYCLING** POLICY FOR TRINIDAD & TOBAGO 2024





# Foreword

The ways in which we source, utilise and repurpose our resources are testament to our stewardship of the land on which we live. But more than that, they echo throughout generations, impacting futures that we, ourselves, will not be here to witness. It is critical therefore, that we manage these resources in sustainable ways that will not just benefit current generations, but that will set a foundation upon which those who come after can continue to build.

Indeed, it is the younger generation that must take ownership of the vision enshrined in this policy, and embrace it as they craft a new society. This, of course, does not absolve us, the older ones, of the responsibility of taking the necessary steps to secure a better future for us all.

The **National Integrated Solid Waste/Resource Management Policy (NISWRMP)** represents a milestone on that journey. Prepared by the **Ministry of Public Utilities (MPU)** in collaboration with the **Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company (SWMCOL)**, the NISWRMP outlines a strategic framework that brings together various stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, private sector entities and civil society, to work collaboratively towards effective waste management solutions..

It does this while emphasizing the principles of reducing, reusing and recycling, thus promoting waste reduction at the source, encouraging the reuse of materials and enhancing recycling processes – all geared towards minimizing the environmental impact of waste, and establishing a circular economy.

Furthermore, the NISWRMP addresses the need for robust infrastructure, innovative technologies, and capacity-building initiatives to support efficient waste management practices. It also highlights the importance of public awareness and education in driving behavioural change and fostering a culture of environmental responsibility.

As we embark on the implementation of this policy, we invite all of Trinidad and Tobago to join us on a journey towards a more environmentally-aware society that responsibly and intentionally utilises its resources to build a secure and sustainable future.



Warm regards,  
**Honourable Marvin Gonzales**  
**Minister of Public Utilities**





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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>EMA</b>	- Environmental Management Authority
<b>EM</b>	- Environmental Management
<b>EPR</b>	- Extended Producer Responsibility
<b>GoRTT</b>	- Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
<b>LGAs</b>	- Local Government Agencies
<b>MSW</b>	- Municipal Solid Waste
<b>NEP (2018)</b>	- National Environmental Policy 2018
<b>NISWRMP</b>	- National Integrated Solid Waste /Resource Management Policy for Trinidad and Tobago 2024
<b>NRP 2024</b>	- National Recycling Policy for Trinidad and Tobago 2024



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Recycling Policy for Trinidad and Tobago (NRP) 2024 builds on the National Waste Recycling Policy 2015 and is one of the key policies which contribute to the vision and policy strategies of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GoRTT) in relation to the goals of Theme 5 -- “Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development” -- of the Vision 2030 National Development Strategy 2016-2030 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It sets a framework for developing a circular economy and the establishment of a National Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Recycling System.

## Vision

The creation of a society that maximizes the recovery, reuse and recycling of resources in a manner that recaptures misplaced resources and preserves the environment.



## Goal

To establish a National Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Recycling System that drives the incremental reduction of waste landfilled by 50% over ten (10) years by recapturing waste as a resource to support sustainable industries and reduce the impact of waste on human health and the environment.







The NRP 2024 focusses on seven primary (7) objectives consistent with the zero-waste hierarchy, while creating a circular economy and promoting the environmentally sound management of resources by reducing the use of materials, toxic substances, and energy, and repairing, reusing and recycling. The seven primary (7) objectives of the NRP 2024 are to:

- Strengthen national policies, legislation and programmes to prioritize waste avoidance and encourage efficient use, reuse and repair practices, and develop a circular economy through a sustainable materials management system for the recovery and recycling of plastics, beverage containers (constructed of metal, glass, plastic, paper or other material or any combination of those materials), tyres, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), used lubricating oil, organic wastes, paper, glass and metals (consistent with the Scrap Metal Policy of Trinidad and Tobago).
- Increase collection and improve materials management infrastructure to promote local recycling and the development of downstream industries.
- Optimize the quality and value of recycled materials by reducing potential contamination in the recycled materials stream and discourage the recycling of toxic chemicals into consumer products.
- Increase use of recycled materials and build demand and markets for recycled products.
- Enhance education and outreach to the public to create a culture of shared responsibility for the environmentally sound management of recyclable materials in the MSW.
- Better manage material flows to benefit human health, the environment, and the economy.
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to consistently measure the performance of the National MSW Recycling System and improve the availability and transparency of data to support innovation, guide investment and enable informed consumer decisions.



# NATIONAL RECYCLING POLICY FOR TRINIDAD & TOBAGO 2024

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 A CASE FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Over the last decade, waste management has been evolving, and similar to countries worldwide, Trinidad and Tobago is faced with increasing waste generation volumes and complexities. While there is a global movement towards adopting circular economy strategies and zero waste management methods that promote waste avoidance, reduction and diversion from conventional landfills, as well as recycling, the primary method of waste management in Trinidad and Tobago continues to be conventional landfilling.

Research has found that the application of circular economy strategies involving industrial processes and economic activities that are regenerative or restorative by design results in the minimisation of waste through superior design of materials, products and systems, including business systems. A circular economy reduces materials use, redesigns materials to be less resource intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource that can serve as feedstock to manufacture new materials and products.

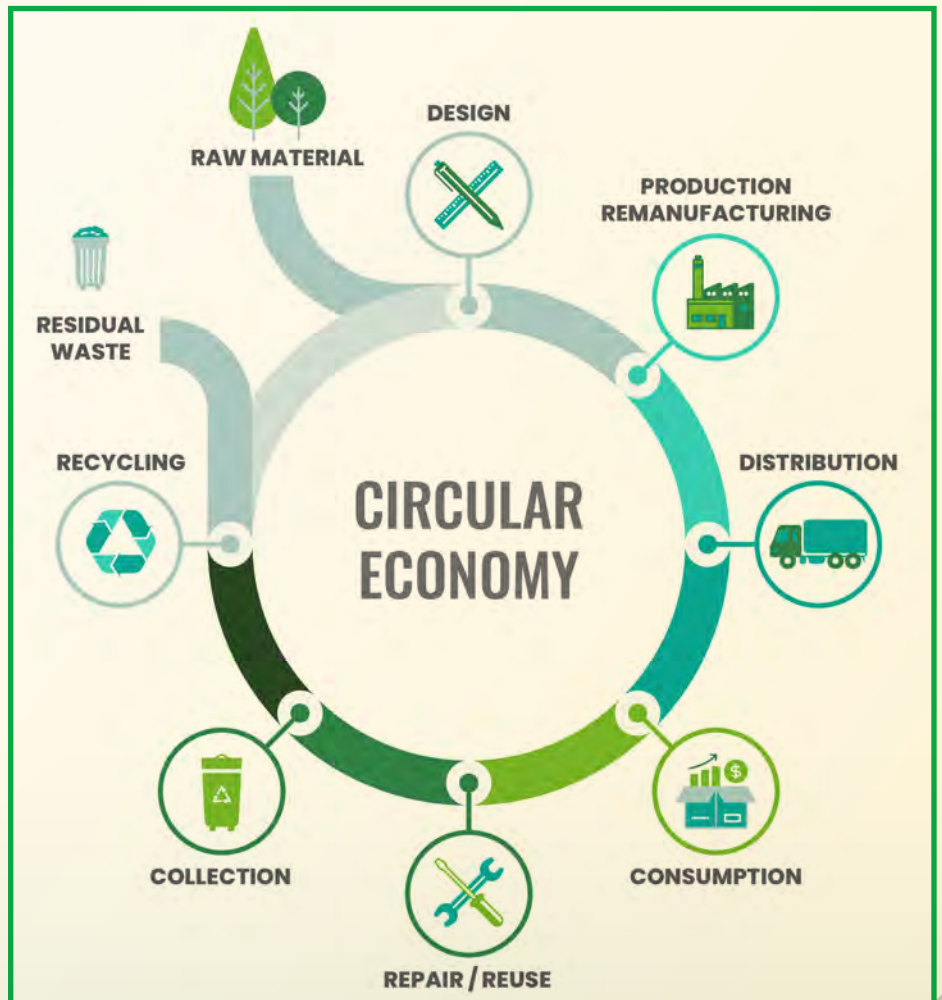


Figure 1: Diagram of Circular Economy

MSW recycling is one contributing factor to a circular economy approach, but it is a critical first step since it serves as a key mechanism for returning materials to the supply chain.

The Waste Characterization & Centroid Study, 2023 estimated that 77% of the waste generated was recyclable while the Solid Waste Characterisation Study for Tobago, September 2010, estimated that 88% of the waste disposed at the Studley Park landfill comprised recyclable material. These misplaced resources could be reintroduced into domestic manufacturing processes or recycled into new marketable products. See Table 1.

**Table 1: Composition of Municipal Solid Waste Generated in Trinidad & Tobago**

Trinidad	Average Proportion %
Material	
Recyclable	
Biowaste	32.4
Plastics excluding beverage containers	18.1
Paper (all classes),	18.0
Glass	5.5
Metals, Ferrous	1.2
Metals, Non-ferrous	1.5
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>76.6</b>
Non-recyclable	
Composites	2.18
Sanitary Textiles	4.98
Textiles and clothing	6.38
Household Hazardous	0.66
Other	0.32
Construction and demolition	8.79
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>23.3</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Tobago	Average Proportion %
Material	
Paper and Paperboard	29.9
Glass	8.3
Metals	3.0
Plastic	21.8
Textiles	9.6
Organics	25.7
Construction and Demolition	0.1
Special Care	0.2
Other Wastes	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:**

*Waste Characterization & Centroid Study for Trinidad, 2023; Solid Waste Characterisation Study for Tobago, September 2010.*

In this context, GoRTT recognises the economic value lost when recyclable materials are treated as waste and are disposed at the landfills. GoRTT has committed to developing appropriate policy, legislation, institutional arrangements, and key infrastructure, to strengthen the MSW recycling sector and promote downstream industries as a step towards creating a sustainable sector.



## 2.0 A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

The NRP 2024 sets a framework to recapture misplaced resources from the MSW stream, thus facilitating the establishment of a National Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Recycling System and the development of a circular economy. The focus will be on developing the MSW Recycling System for plastics, beverage containers (constructed of metal, glass, plastic, paper or other material or any combination of those materials), tyres, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), used lubricating oil, organic wastes, paper, glass and metals (consistent with the Scrap Metal Policy of Trinidad and Tobago).

The NRP 2024 aims to improve local recycling capabilities in support of the National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago (Vision 2030), Theme 5 - Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development. The short, medium and long-term goals are consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



(SDGs), particularly those applicable to the MSW sector as depicted in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: UN Sustainable Development Goals related to the MSW Sector**

By applying the principles of a circular economy, it reflects new ways of thinking about waste as a resource, while building on the idea of continually reusing, recycling and reprocessing resources, resources, which in turn, support better support better and repeated use of our resources.

However, applying the circular economy principles to waste management also requires a holistic and integrated system approach that examines product design, production, use and reuse, recycling and disposal to manage the life cycle of materials and the full associated costs.

## 2.1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the NRP 2024 is to identify deliberate objectives and policy strategies to create a strong, resilient and cost-effective MSW Recycling System.

The NRP 2024 addresses the management of recyclable materials from the MSW stream, which includes residential, commercial and institutional sources, where:

- a. **Residential sources** include wastes generated by the normal activities of households, including, but not limited to, food wastes, rubbish, ashes, and bulky wastes.

**Where:**

- i. Rubbish is a general term for solid waste (semi-solid, liquid and gaseous waste) taken from residences, commercial establishments, and institutions.
  - ii. Bulky waste means large items of solid waste such as household appliances, furniture, large auto parts, trees, branches, stumps, and other oversize wastes whose large size precludes or complicates their handling by normal solid wastes collection, processing, or disposal methods.
- b. **Commercial sources** include all types of solid wastes generated by stores, offices, restaurants, warehouses, and other non-manufacturing activities, subject to the Waste Management Rules 2021, Schedule 1 and Schedule 2; and
  - c. **Institutional sources** include waste generated by educational institutions, non-medical waste generated by health care providers, and non-manufacturing waste generated by correctional and government facilities, and other institutional facilities.

## 2.2 VISION

The creation of a society that maximizes the recovery, reuse and recycling of resources in a manner that recaptures misplaced resources and preserves the environment.



## 2.3 GOAL

To establish a National Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Recycling System that drives the incremental reduction of waste landfilled by 50% over ten (10) years by recapturing waste as a resource to support sustainable industries and reduce the impact of waste on human health and the environment.







## 2.4 OBJECTIVES

To support the achievement of the vision and goal, and improve the overall efficiency of the MSW management system, the NRP 2024 places focus on **seven (7) key objectives**:

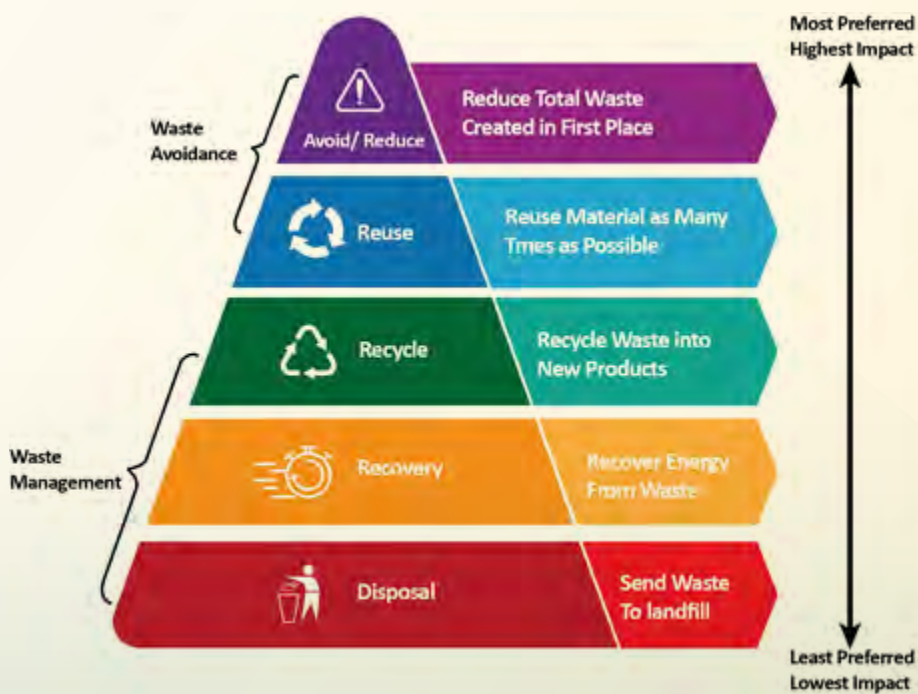
- Strengthen national policies, legislation and programmes to develop a circular economy through a sustainable materials management system for the recovery and recycling of plastics including beverage containers (constructed of metal, glass, plastic, paper or other material or any combination of those materials), tyres, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), used lubricating oil, organic wastes, paper, glass and metals (consistent with the Scrap Metal Policy of Trinidad and Tobago).
- Prioritize waste avoidance and encourage efficient use, reuse and repair.
- Increase collection and improve materials management infrastructure to promote local recycling and the development of downstream industries.
- Optimize the quality and value of recycled materials by reducing potential contamination in the recycled materials stream, and discourage the recycling of toxic chemicals into consumer products.
- Increase use of recycled materials and build demand and markets for recycled products.
- Enhance education and outreach to the public to create a culture of shared responsibility for the environmentally sound management of recyclable materials in the MSW.
- Better manage material flows to benefit human health, the environment and the economy.
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to consistently measure the performance of the MSW Recycling System and improve the availability and transparency of data to support innovation, guide investment and enable informed consumer decisions.

# 3.0 THE POLICY INSTRUMENT

## 3.1 OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

The overarching principles of the NRP 2024 have been informed by the National Integrated Solid Waste/Resource Management Policy 2024 (NISWRMP 2024) and the National Environmental Policy 2018 (NEP 2018). These principles, which will guide the implementation of the wider plans for the management of the MSW Recycling System, are as follows:

- **Respect and Care for the Community of Life:** implementation of this Policy will be based on the premise that the integrated community of life shall be respected and supported.
- **Sustainable Development:** development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- **Sustainable Consumption and Production:** the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations.
- **Solid Waste Management Hierarchy:** the waste hierarchy is the framework for action. It stresses the need to manage waste in an integrated system, in accordance with the preferred waste management practice. These practices place an emphasis on avoiding and reusing waste as the preferred practices prior to recycling, energy recovery and disposal by landfilling. (Figure 3)



*Figure 3: Solid Waste Management Hierarchy*





- **Circular Economy:** policy strategies will promote an economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the continuous use of resources.
- **Evidence-Based Management:** policy formulation and implementation will be based, to the maximum extent possible, on tangible evidence, data and information as the basis of decision-making.
- **Precautionary Principle:** lack of scientific certainty as to the likelihood, magnitude, or causation of a potentially negative environmental impact, will not be used as a justification to prevent action to avoid serious or irreversible potential harm to human health and the environment.
- **User Pay Principle:** where a user of a service or resource pays directly for the amount they use, rather than the cost being shared by all the users or a community equally. Those who generate more waste should pay more for having their waste managed. The GoRTT will encourage and facilitate enhanced levels of waste management including cost recovery from commercial waste generators, linked to the amount of waste they generate. This will provide these waste generators with incentives to reduce, reuse, and recycle the waste generated from their activities.
- **Regulatory Tools:** applied where necessary to influence a direct response to particularly wasteful practices. These tools will also ensure that waste generation is minimized in ways that are broadly fair and equitable across society. The GoRTT, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, will take all necessary measures to ensure that this Policy and its enabling legislation are adequately enforced, this includes the provision of adequate personnel and resources.
- **Policy Integration:** waste prevention strategies, such as reduction, reuse and recycling are critical components of a wider integrated solid waste management system and would therefore be linked to, and harmonised as far as possible, with other relevant policy areas and instruments.
- **Accountability:** there will be fairness, transparency and accountability in the formulation, adoption and implementation of policy instruments and measures.
- **Empowerment, Collaboration and Participation:** the costs, benefits and responsibility for waste prevention will be shared among all stakeholders, who must be provided with the right to actively participate in the management and decision-making processes.
- **Viewing Waste as a Resource:** to transition to a new way of thinking about waste, based on principles of sustainability and resource conservation.

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** where manufacturers/generators play a role in the treatment and disposal of products at the end-of-life.
- **Government as a Leader:** to steer the country towards a vision, where the GoRTT will lead the way by ensuring that their actions are consistent with the Policy.
- **Product Stewardship:** with the intent being that GoRTT will reduce its role in the management of some wastes, while those that produce, import, sell, and use products will assume greater responsibility for the management of products at the end of their useful lives. This approach will be supported by the EPR Systems that require direct stewardship for items generated.
- **Private Sector Initiatives:** for the private sector to take a greater role in addressing the waste management dilemma consistent with the national vision. It advocates greater private sector involvement in solid waste management, and sets out the procedure for identifying, selecting, certifying, contracting, monitoring and evaluating private service providers.
- **Consolidate and Build Recovery and Recycling Efforts:** to organize, formalize and consolidate recovery and recycling efforts and build on the existing initiatives, so that the Local Government Agencies (LGAs), the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and, by extension, the country can more fully realize the environmental and economic benefits of diverting resources from the waste stream and recycling.

## 3.2 POLICY STRATEGIES

The policy strategies for achieving the goal and objectives of the NRP 2024 are categorized into the following key development areas:

- Policy and Legislative Framework
- Institutional and Capacity Building
- Waste Minimization and Diversion
- Stakeholder Awareness and Communication
- Financing and Cost Recovery Mechanisms
- Data Availability

### 3.2.1 POLICY & LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

1. Develop national policy and legislation to facilitate the introduction of a national recycling programme for beverage containers being the first waste stream to be addressed followed by other waste streams including Tyres, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), Used Lubricating Oil, Organic Wastes, Paper and Cardboard, Glass and Metals (consistent with Scrap Metal Act, 2022).
2. Establish a regulatory framework as the basis to undertake cost recovery through EPR Systems, supported by incentives and economic instruments as an integral part of managing the various recyclable materials, thus encouraging and facilitating the diversion and recovery of these materials. Generators will be required to take responsibility through the product life cycle approach with the appropriate regulatory instruments and incentives developed to support the programmes.



3. Develop appropriate systems to ensure compliance to laws and regulations to reflect the nature of the offences and to create an appropriate deterrent.
4. Develop legislation establishing minimum recycled content standards in products and packaging.
5. Develop sustainable administration mechanisms to efficiently support the national recycling programme.
6. Adopt and strengthen policy, legislative frameworks and mechanisms to enable the sharing of appropriate management responsibilities to governmental and non-governmental stakeholders (e.g. private sector, community-based organisations, volunteer groups) and facilitate agreements between the State and private sector to enhance the involvement of the private sector in waste collection, operation of collection centres/depots, materials recovery centres, recycling plants and other components of the waste recycling system.

### 3.2.2 INSTITUTIONAL AND CAPACITY BUILDING FRAMEWORK

7. Review and rationalise the existing institutional framework, and streamline the governance and administration structure of the sector through the creation of the Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Corporation (SWMCorp) as a statutory body. As the Central System Administrator for the National MSW Recycling System, SWMCorp will manage deposit return and stewardship systems, including registration, managing deposits and handling fees as a “clearinghouse”, and establishing fraud mitigation protocols to maintain performance, arbitrate violations and maintain a competitive “level playing field”.
8. Establish Industry Committees as a forum through which industrial sector entities can actively participate and provide industry insight and recommendations to the Administrator on key aspects of respective recycling programmes for products post-consumer. It is expected that this will allow direct involvement by key stakeholders in the development of environmentally and economically sound and sustainable management approaches for their post-consumer materials.



**Figure 4: Institutional Framework for National MSW Recycling System**

9. Build the capacities of stakeholders from government, civil society and the private sector in technical aspects of waste recycling (including expertise in materials handling, manufacture and marketing; waste separation including source separation; waste recovery; and management and operations of materials recovery centres).
10. Provide resources to assist Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, and the private sector to effectively participate in implementation of waste recycling efforts which may include provision of technical assistance, and financial or material resources to support the development of sustainable recycling industries and small businesses.
11. Institutionalize mechanisms for continued professional development through enhanced training in disciplines relevant to the implementation of the NRP 2024 at the technical, undergraduate, and graduate levels, including the University of the West Indies and the University of Trinidad and Tobago.
12. Explore and utilize opportunities for capacity building and training available regionally and internationally through the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute, the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Caribbean Region, the Regional Activity Centre for the Land Based Sources Protocol and other multilateral agencies.



### 3.2.3 WASTE MINIMIZATION & DIVERSION

13. Prioritize recyclable waste streams and develop strategies to track emerging waste management issues and their potential impact at a national level.
14. Introduce EPR Systems, including deposit return systems, where feasible, for recyclable and reusable materials, and internalize the end-of-life costs of products, including waste management costs and environmental impacts, by extending the responsibility of producers to the end of a product's life cycle.
15. Collaborate with the LGAs and the THA to establish a system for curbside source separation of recyclable and reusable materials, and to encourage the establishment of a network of redemption depots and collection centers to allow the public to drop-off recyclable and reusable materials.
16. Establish the phased prohibition of the landfilling of recyclable and reusable materials and products that are being managed under the National MSW Recycling System.
17. Provide grants from the Resource Recovery Fund (RRF) to promote innovative research and development to create novel products and materials made of recycled materials.
18. Develop new initiatives and innovative opportunities to enhance the reuse and recycling activities of fenceline communities and "informal salvagers" by providing incentives to encourage local small business development in the refurbishment and marketing of used products such as computers, cell phones, televisions, refrigerators, stoves, washing machines and other household appliances and electronics to extend their usability and life.




### 3.2.4 STAKEHOLDER AWARENESS & COMMUNICATION

19. Develop and implement within one (1) year of the adoption of the NRP 2024, a communication strategy to ensure public buy-in of the waste recycling programme and ensure active participation of the public.
20. Collaborate with the LGAs, the THA, relevant Ministries, non-governmental organizations and community organizations to develop a series of direct and sustained national education, awareness and participation programmes to engage all target groups and to reinforce the adoption of zero waste principles through repair, reduce, reuse and recycling.
21. Develop strategies to support consumer choices, including establishing an online Circular Economy Hub and marketplace to promote sustainable public education and awareness of available resources, and bring together buyers and sellers of recovered resources.
22. Utilize, wherever possible, financial resources from the RRF to support education and awareness programmes geared towards waste recycling.

### 3.2.5 FINANCING & COST RECOVERY MECHANISMS

23. Develop sustainable financing mechanisms to support the NRP 2024 by:
  - Establishing, administering, and utilizing the RRF to address operations and management financing relating to recycling services, incentives and deposit return systems. The resources of the RRF will include:
    - ◆ sums of money appropriated by Parliament for the operation of the RRF;
    - ◆ sums of money which SWMCorp collects as deposits under deposit return systems or in relation to other systems to encourage recycling;
    - ◆ sums of money which are provided to SWMCorp or the GoRTT by foreign States, international organisations, multilateral or bilateral lending agencies, private individuals, foundations, corporations or other entities to encourage recycling; and
    - ◆ other sums to which the Fund may make a lawful claim.



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24. Encourage access to the Green Fund to support sustainable communities and civil society participation in waste recycling.
  25. Support investments in infrastructure that expands local recycling programmes, develops repair, refurbishment and recycling facilities, and increases the capacity of the manufacturing sector to incorporate recyclable materials into their processing operations.

### **3.2.6 DATA AVAILABILITY**

26. Establish a national repository system to classify, collect, evaluate and publish data and information on sources, composition, quantities and methods in respect to recovered and recycled materials.
27. Develop and maintain a national register of recovery and recycling entities in Trinidad and Tobago.



## 4.0 MONITORING & REPORTING AND REVIEW

Monitoring and reporting will be integral parts of the policy implementation and management process. This process will ensure that the provisions of the NRP 2024 remain relevant while ensuring full transparency and accountability in the implementation of the policy strategies. In this regard, the GoRTT will:

- Establish performance targets for implementation of the NRP 2024 within one (1) year of its adoption; and
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the NPR 2024 every five (5) years and submit recommendations to the Minister with responsibility for recycling.

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## About this Publication

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