



# RECYCLING GUIDE

A guide to collecting,  
sorting, and selling  
recyclables in Namibia



## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations and well done on your decision to collect recyclables!

Your new business will make Namibia cleaner AND create income for you and your family.

We hope this Recycling Guide, compiled by Development Workshop Namibia in collaboration with the Recycle Namibia Forum, will help you get started.

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# INTRODUCTION TO RECYCLING



## What is recycling?

Recycling is the process of taking things that would normally end up in the rubbish dump and changing them into something new. Recycling is good for business, the earth, and your neighbourhood.

When we buy food or home items, most of them come in containers, like cool drinks or cooking oil in plastic bottles. Some come in tins, like tuna or bully beef, while other items come in boxes, like fruit juice or long-life milk. Once we've used or eaten what's in these packages, we usually throw them away. Most of these things can be reused or turned into something total different, a process known as recycling.



## Why do we recycle?

Recycling keeps our environment clean, reduces the amount waste that we create, makes better use of earth's natural resources, and provides an excellent business opportunity! Recyclers like you can be proud of your role in cleaning up the environment, protecting the earth, and providing for your family.



## Purpose of this guide

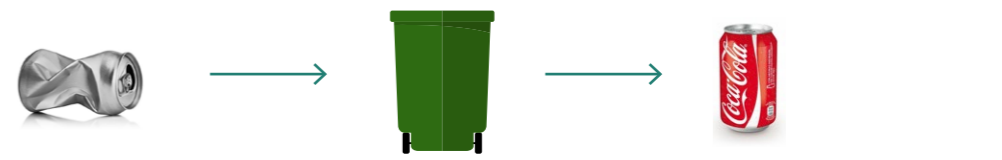
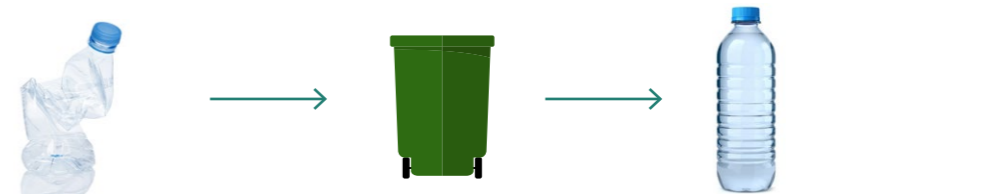
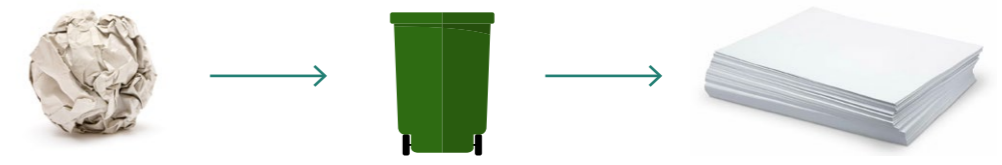
If you recycle, are in the process of recycling, or are interested in recycling, this guide is for you! It explains how to recycle, including how to gather, sort, and sell items that can be recycled (known as recyclables) to local recycling companies.

This guide will give you practical tips on ways to handle recyclables safely and make the most out of your recycling business. By reading this guide, you will also understand what happens to your recyclables after you collect them and sell them to a local business.

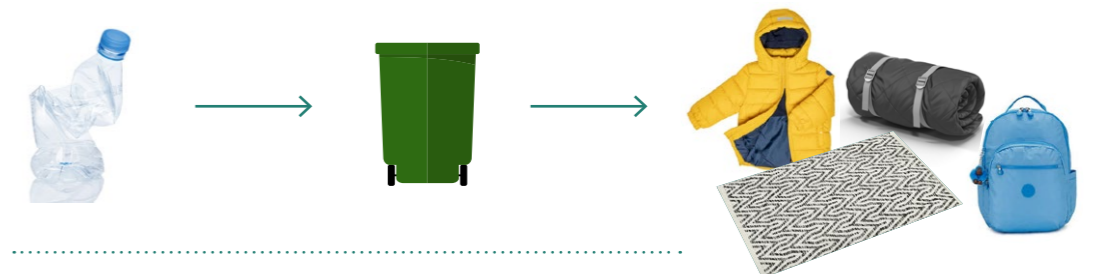
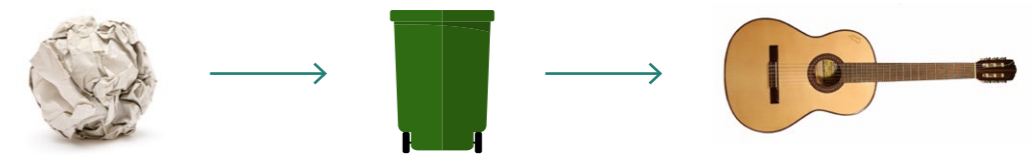
Knowing what can and can't be recycled and how to sort recyclables in ways that buyers want them is important for your recycling business to be successful. Sorting recyclables will help you get a good price for your goods.

At the end of the guide, there is a list of businesses that are in your town that buy sorted recyclables. Some of them can buy all of types of recyclables, while others, for example, only buy aluminium cans or cool drink bottles. This list helps you find buyers for your recycled items.

## Product Transformation SAME PRODUCT



## Product Transformation DIFFERENT PRODUCT





## The Recycling Process

Your recycling business is part of a bigger recycling process. Your part of the chain involves four steps before a recycling company pays for your items, processes them and sells them on to other companies to turn them into new items. Once these items are used, the process starts all over again!

**The four key steps of your recycling business that are covered in this guide are:**

1. Collecting recyclables in your area, usually with refuse bags
2. Sorting your items into different bags according to their type at your sorting area
3. Baling and/or crushing items to prepare them for transport
4. Transporting bags to the recycling facility – getting paid



## Myths and Facts About Recycling

### Myths

- You can easily get sick if you work in recycling business
- Recycling is a job for woman
- People that are involved in waste management are poorly paid
- Men are mocked when they are in the waste business, leaving this gap for women to fill

### Facts

- With proper protection equipment the health risks are minimal
- Recycling business attracts anyone and is not gendered
- Recycling is a rewarding business which offers many opportunities to make money
- Recycling is important in every country just like other tasks in society – men and women can do it

# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO RECYCLING

## 1 STEP 1 Collecting Recyclables

You can collect recyclable material almost anywhere, and you can even start at home. You can also ask your family, friends, and neighbours to help you collect recyclables, or you can make deals with local shops, bars, and schools to give you their recyclables regularly. Another option is to organise or take part in clean-ups in your area, and ask people to separate recycling materials from the solid waste they collected.

### note

If you want to pick up recycling materials at the dump or garbage gathering point, you need to talk to your town or local authority first to get permission.

## let's get started!

**If you want to collect, sort, and sell your recyclables, some preparation is needed.**

1. Get a rubbish bag or a plastic bag for recycling so you can carry it to sorting area.
2. Create a place to sort things, preferably in a shady area (under shade cloth or a tree)
3. Buy large containers (1-tonne bags or something similar) in which to put the different kinds of recyclables that have been sorted.
4. Find a safe place to keep your recyclables until your buyer or recycler comes to pick them up or you can drop them off.

### note

Empty and dry all containers, do not collect contaminated or hazardous materials.



An example of a recycling site with 1-tonne bags



## PLEASE ENSURE YOUR SAFETY

It is very important that you wear safety clothing when you are collecting or sorting the materials. This will stop you from getting sick or accidentally touching dangerous substances. **Safety clothing includes:**

1. Protective clothing ( e.g. overalls)
2. Closed shoes
3. Gloves
4. Hat
5. Mask
6. Safety glasses



Recycler in Hadino Nghishongwa wearing proper protective clothing for recycling

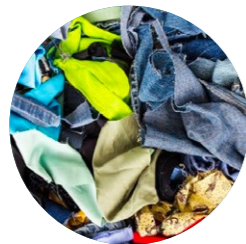
## WHAT NOT TO COLLECT FOR RECYCLING

Some things cannot be recycled. This rubbish should be placed in a dustbin for collection by the municipality, or reused if possible.

The following items are NOT recyclable:



Light bulbs



Old clothing and fabric



Paint containers



Drinking glasses



Petrol and oil containers



Metal spoons, knives and forks



Ceramic bowls, plates and cups

## 2

## STEP 2 Sorting Recyclables

Sorting is the process of putting collected recyclables into different groups according to various requirements, some according to color, some according to material type, and some depending on the preference of the local buyer or their recyclability.

Sorted materials are often sold at a better price compared to unsorted materials, because if you sell mixed materials, the local business that buys your material will have to pay someone to sort it. They will not give you the best price! Your business will make more money if you SORT the materials.

This section shows you different ways on how you can sort, but you should also contact your local buyer to find out how they prefer the material to be sorted.

Many items have a sign on them like those shown below. These signs tell you which category that item falls into. If you put all items with the 1 PETE sign on them together, for example, they will be in the same category. This section of the guide will also help you decide which category your items fall into.

### Recycling signs:

Recycling signs found on many items tell you which category to sort those items into



**PETE**  
POLYETHYLENE TEREPHTHALATE  
Cosmetic containers  
Plastic bottles  
Mouthwash bottles  
Prepared food trays



**HDPE**  
HIGH DENSITY POLYETHYLENE  
Detergent bottles  
Grocery bags  
Milk bottles  
Shampoo bottles



**V**  
POLYVINYL CHLORIDE  
Garden hose  
Window frames  
Blood bags  
Blister packs



**LDPE**  
LOW DENSITY POLYETHYLENE  
6 pack rings  
Cling film  
Bread bags  
Squeezable bottles



**PP**  
POLYPROPYLENE  
Bottle caps  
Packaging tape  
Cereal liners  
Straws



**PS**  
POLYSTYRENE  
Disposable coffee cups  
Styrofoam  
Plastic cutlery  
Foam packaging



**OTHER**  
POLYCARBONATE  
Baby bottles  
Water cooler bottles  
Fiberglass  
Tupperware



# 1 PET PLASTICS

The most common type of plastic that can be recycled is Polyethylene terephthalate, known as PET or PETE. PET is a strong and lightweight plastic container.

There are different types of PET and are sorted/separated according to their color.

## a) PET clear:

Only clear PET bottles should be placed in this group, remove the caps and leave the labels on.



## b) PET brown:

All brown PET bottles should be placed in this group, remember to remove the caps.



## c) PET green:

All green PET bottles should be placed in this group, remember to remove the caps.



### note

You can also recycle the caps removed from the PET bottles, put them all in one bag/plastic

# 2 HIGH-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE (HDPE)

HDPE is the material used for containers for household cleaning chemical products such as laundry detergent, fabric softener, and bleach. HDPE containers should be sorted into the following categories.

## a) HDPE white and clear:

All the white and clear HDPE should be placed in one group/bag, please remove the caps.



## b) HDPE Mix:

Includes 2L fresh milk containers, cleaning products that are red, blue, black, yellow, violet etc., please remove the caps.



# 3 LDPE – HEAVY PRINT

LDPE includes all printed plastic bags such as the plastic used for 6 packs of beer or other beverages and black plastic or refuse bags.





## 4 CLEAR PLASTIC BAGS/WRAP

This category includes all the clear plastics with no print on them as shown below, e.g. shopping bags with no print or letters of the name of a shop. If it is not dirty, cling wrap and the non-printed plastic covering of 6-pack drinks can also be sorted separately.



## 5 OTHER PLASTIC CONTAINERS

This category contains all plastic containers that are not marked as PET. These plastics are used to produce fuel or energy (known as Refuse Derived Fuel). Examples include cooking oil containers (including 5L containers), body lotions less than 750 ml and others shown in the figures on the right. Caps can stay on.



## 6 TETRAPAK

This is a type of carton mainly used to make containers for juices and milk. There are two types of Tetrapak: those with foil inside and those without foil. These should be sorted into separate groups. Caps can stay on.

a) Tetrapak without foil inside



b) Tetrapak with foil inside.



## 7 CORRUGATED CARTON BOXES

All the boxes that are corrugated (see the figure below) belong to this category e.g. boxes used to carry a 24 pack of 500 ml of coke cans or pizza boxes.



### note

Different types of cardboard:



Cardboard Medium (squiggly middle part)



New Cardboard



Paper board



Paper bag



## 8 COMMON MIXED BOXES

This category contains smooth (non corrugated) boxes such as corn flakes boxes, jungle oats etc.



## 9 GLASS

There is no need to separate your glass – you can put clear and coloured glass bottles, containers and jars together, this includes mayonnaise bottles. You can collect beverage bottles, sauce and jam bottles, condiment glass jars and cosmetic bottles. All glass bottles go in one bag, regardless of the color (pink, brown, clear etc.)

### note

- Drinking glasses (wine and beer glasses, etc.) are not recyclable – they are made of plated glass.
- Ceramic bowls, coffee mugs, plates and containers are not recyclable.



## 10 CANS AND TINS

Cans are separated into aluminium cans (beverage cans) and aerosol cans, while tins are also sorted separately. Make sure you empty all the liquids in cans or remove the food in tins.

### a) Beverage or aluminium cans



### b) Aerosol cans:

all deodorant, and body spray cans are sorted into one group.



### c) Tins:

includes all food cans e.g. beans or jam, coffee cans, doom and air fresheners sprays



## 11 PAPER

### a) Newspaper

Paper is separated into four different categories, depending on the way it feels, i.e. glossy, normal office paper, magazines and newspapers.



### a) Magazine





## PAPER cont.

### c) Glossy Paper

includes posters and leaflets.



### d) Office paper - white only

includes shredded paper



## NOTE

If you have a Rent-A-Drum outlet in your town, you can include these items in your recycling bin: Pet food bags, without foil. Plastic seedling trays.



Plastic seedling trays



Pet food bags (without foil)

# 3

## STEP 3

### Baling or Compressing Recyclables

Baling is the process of compressing sorted materials into a block (a “bale”) that is held together with plastic or wire straps. This simply means you need to compress the containers collected. Although you do not need to compress or bale your materials to sell them, doing this reduces transport costs and increases your profit.



#### Why do you need to compress the materials?

1. Baled materials take up less space, this allows you to fit more materials into a one-tonne bag.
2. If you are transporting the materials to sell to a local business, you can carry more materials in one go.
3. A bale or bag containing baled materials weigh more compared to uncompressed materials in a bag or a bale. For example: a bag of un-baled PET drinking bottles weighs about 10 kg and will only fit 200 bottles; a bag of baled drinking bottles weighs about 50 kg and fits 500 bottles. Recycling companies pay you per kg.

Baling machines are expensive and usually used in the big recycling businesses. You can use any tool available in your area like a hard metal or a brick to compress your collected recyclables. Please do not bale using your bare hands or feet.

#### Other important tips while crushing or baling:

- Keep paper products and cartons clean and dry
- Flatten cardboard boxes
- Crush your aluminium cans so that they take up less space
- Remove the lids from bottles and jars

# 4 Selling Recyclables

You can sell your recyclables to a recycling facility (such as Rent-A-Drum, Scrap Salvage, etc.) or to a buy-back centre, see the annexure at the end of the guide for a full list. These businesses immediately pay for recyclables from anyone who brings these items to their centres. Buy-back centres are usually located within communities, while recycling facilities may be further away.

The recycling facility or buy-back centre will then sell the recyclables to other companies (usually outside Namibia) that will use the material to make other things.

**All recycling facilities and buy-back centres (that buy and receive recyclables) must be registered with their local municipality.**

You can approach your municipality, town council or constituency offices to find out where the recycling facilities are in your town or city.

**note**  
Negotiate for the best price for your recyclables – the larger volumes you collect, the better price you will be paid.

## Buy-back centres in Windhoek

The Solid Waste Division of the Municipality of Windhoek is setting up two buy-back centres in Katutura and Khomasdal. This means that your bags of SORTED recyclables can be weighed and you will immediately be paid for it.

- The first buy-back centre is in Bondel Street close to Katutura State Hospital, and is scheduled to open in 2023, with the second centre following later in the year.
- Contact City of Windhoek Solid Waste Management for information on companies buying recyclables. Their offices are located opposite China Town in the Northern Industrial area (Tel: 061 2903110).
- Also have a look at Recycle Namibia Forum’s Green Directory to find the names of more recycling facilities across Namibia. <https://rnf.com.na/green-directory>.

**Acknowledgements**  
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# ANNEX: List of Recyclers in Namibia

This list is correct as at July 2023 – and is subject to change.

No	Company	Town	Contact	Recyclable
1	City of Windhoek	Windhoek	061 290 3110	Glasses, Metals, Papers, Plastics, Tetrapak
2	Epupa Cleaning Services	Windhoek	081 129 2948	Glasses, Metals, Papers, Plastics
3	Erongo Drum	Arandis, Outjo, Otjiwarongo, Karibib	081 242 0006 081 289 5707	Glasses, Metals, Papers, Plastics, Tetrapak
4	Grootfontein Recycling	Grootfonten, Tsumeb	081 219 8948	Glasses, Metals, Papers, Plastics
5	Kleen Tek	Windhoek	083 330 6035	Glasses, Metals, Papers, Plastics, Tetrapak
6	Ngunga Investment	Windhoek	081 838 6421 081 623 5927	Glasses, Metals
7	Planaria Recycling	Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, Aus	081 741 1724	Glasses, Metals, Papers, Plastics
8	Rent-a-Drum	Windhoek, Okahandja, Oshakati, Ondangwa, Rundu, Oranjemund, Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, Henties Bay, Arandis	081 612 44097	Glasses, Metals, Papers, Plastics, Tetrapak
9	Veldschoen Waste Management Solution	Nationwide	081 365 9871	Glasses, Metals, Papers, Plastics, Tetrapak
10	Walkers Recycling	Dordabis	081 375 9918	Glasses, Metals, Papers, Plastics
11	Scrap Salvage	Windhoek, Walvis bay, Ondangwa, Oshakati, Outjo, Rundu, Tsumeb, Karasburg, Keetmanshoop, Mariental, Karibib, Usakos, Gobabis, Henties Bay	061 300 444	Metals
12	John Henry Waste Management	Rehoboth	062 524 947	Papers, Plastics, Tetrapak
13	Namibia Plastic Converters	Windhoek, Okahandja	062 501 171	Plastics
14	Namibia Polymer Recyclers	Windhoek	062 500 126	Plastics
15	Plastic Packaging	Windhoek, Rundu, Walvis Bay, Tsumeb, Keetmanshoop	061 299 5000	Plastics
16	Capitec Waste Management	Windhoek	081 144 331	Please contact company
17	Cleanco Waste Management	Windhoek	081 713 4093	Please contact company

Please confirm with the company on the type of recyclables they collect as this may change from time to time.



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