

City of Cape Town commits to diverting organic waste from landfills

As part of its efforts to progressively reduce disposal of organic waste at landfills, the City of Cape Town is testing various strategies that can help achieve very ambitious diversion targets contained in its Urban Waste Management Sector Plan and the Provincial Integrated Waste Management Plan.



Source: Supplied

These documents target a 50% reduction in organic waste disposed at landfills by 2022 and 100% diversion of organic waste from landfills by 2027. One of the exciting strategies is the Langa Organic Waste Diversion Project.

Since mid-November 2021, approximately 10 tons of organic waste has been diverted from landfills to create compost for local feeding schemes by a Langa project. This project involves collecting waste from five fruit and veg traders and transporting it to a composting facility, where it is beneficiated for use by local food gardens.

However, this is currently being scaled up significantly. Approximately 400 households have been recruited through local schools to participate in this project and from the beginning of the new school term.

They are being requested to separate their organic waste for the benefit of local feeding schemes. EPWP workers will be operating bicycle-drawn trailers, which will be used to collect the organic waste.



Activists and learners clean up Mfuleni, Cape Town wetland

Vincent Lali 25 Mar 2022



Landfills are big contributors to climate change

Once the compost has been unloaded at designated sites, the team will measure, record decant the materials, clean the containers, prepare, maintain the compost heaps and sieve the ready compost for distribution back into local food gardens.

Landfills are surprisingly big contributors to carbon emissions and climate change. When organic waste breaks down in a landfill, it produces landfill gas. This gas, made up primarily of methane, is understood to have a global warming potential 25 times higher than carbon dioxide.

“Diverting organic waste to composting programmes avoids the production of landfill gas, and can also help the food gardens that feed so many of our most marginalised residents. Whatever angle you look at this project from, it is a win for the people of Cape Town,” said mayoral committee member for Urban Waste Management, Alderman Grant Twigg.

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