

“ The City of Heritage ”



ULUNDI MUNICIPALITY

RECYCLING POLICY

FINAL 2026/2027

Table of Contents

1. Definitions and Abbreviations	3
2. Preamble	4
3. Legislative and Policy Framework	5
4. Purpose of the Policy	5
5. Scope of Application	5
6. Policy Objectives	5
7. Guiding Principles	6
8. Ulundi Buy-Back Centre Operational Framework	6
9. Recyclable Materials	7
10. Price List and Tariff Management	8
11. Registration and Integration of Collectors	8
12. Health, Safety and Environmental Management	9
13. Partnerships and Market Development	9
14. Roles and Responsibilities	10
15. Recordkeeping, Monitoring and Reporting	10
16. Performance Indicators	11
17. Awareness, Education and Behaviour Change	11
18. Compliance and Enforcement	11
19. Review, Amendment and Repeal	12

1.. Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Meaning
Buy-Back Centre (BBC)	A municipal or approved facility where recyclable materials are received, weighed, sorted, stored and sold to recycling markets or Producer Responsibility Organisations.
Circular economy	An economic approach that keeps materials in use for as long as possible through avoidance, reduction, reuse, repair, refurbishment, recycling and recovery.
Collector / reclaimer / waste picker	A person or group that collects recyclable materials from households, businesses, streets, public areas or other permitted areas for sale or recovery.
Contaminated recyclables	Recyclable materials mixed with food residue, hazardous waste, healthcare risk waste, chemicals, sewage, oils or other substances that make the material unsafe or uneconomical to recycle.
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)	A regulatory approach under which producers of identified products are responsible for the post-consumer management, collection, recycling, recovery, reporting and financing of those products.
Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP)	A municipal planning instrument that guides waste avoidance, reduction, collection, recycling, treatment, disposal, compliance and reporting.
Recycling	The reclaiming, processing and conversion of discarded materials into usable raw materials or new products.
Separation at source	The separation of recyclable, organic, residual and hazardous waste at the point where waste is generated.
Waste hierarchy	The preferred order of waste management: avoid and reduce first, then reuse, recycle, recover and dispose as a last resort.
Waste Information System	A system used to record waste quantities, categories, movement, recycling, recovery and disposal information for municipal, provincial or national reporting.

2. Preamble

Ulundi Municipality recognises the constitutional right of everyone to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being, and the duty to protect the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

This Recycling Policy replaces and strengthens the existing Ulundi Recycling Policy by aligning municipal recycling operations with the waste hierarchy, circular economy principles, Extended Producer Responsibility requirements, waste picker integration, occupational health and safety, municipal reporting and sustainable waste service delivery.

The Municipality currently depends on waste transfer and disposal arrangements for residual waste. Recycling and recovery are therefore essential to reduce waste transported for disposal, preserve landfill airspace, reduce illegal dumping, create local income opportunities and support a cleaner Ulundi.

3. Legislative and Policy Framework

This policy must be interpreted and implemented in line with the latest applicable legislation, regulations, national norms and standards, municipal by-laws. Key instruments include:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.
- National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998).
- National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act 59 of 2008), as amended.
- National Waste Management Strategy 2020, and any final revised National Waste Management Strategy adopted after public consultation.
- Draft National Waste Management Strategy 2026, noting its policy direction on circular economy, effective and sustainable waste services, capacity building and compliance monitoring.
- Regulations Regarding Extended Producer Responsibility, 2020, as amended, including product notices for paper, packaging, some single-use products, electrical and electronic equipment, lighting and other identified products.
- National Waste Information Regulations, 2012, as amended.
- National Domestic Waste Collection Standards, 2011.
- National Norms and Standards for the Storage of Waste, 2013.
- National Norms and Standards for the Sorting, Shredding, Grinding, Crushing, Screening or Baling of General Waste, 2017.
- National Norms and Standards for Disposal of Waste to Landfill, 2013, as amended.
- Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act 85 of 1993).

- Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000).
- Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act 56 of 2003).
- Ulundi Municipality Integrated Development Plan, Integrated Waste Management Plan, SDBIP, applicable by-laws and Council resolutions.

4. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear governance and operational framework for recycling, the Ulundi Buy-Back Centre and related recycling initiatives within the municipal area. The policy seeks to maximise waste diversion from disposal, strengthen compliance, support waste collectors, promote job creation and ensure transparent management of recyclable materials and revenue.

5. Scope of Application

This policy applies to:

- all municipal recycling and buy-back centre activities operated, funded, supported or regulated by Ulundi Municipality;
- municipal employees, service providers, contractors, recyclers, collectors, reclaimers and community partners involved in municipal recycling initiatives;
- recyclable materials generated by households, businesses, institutions, municipal facilities, public spaces and events within the municipal jurisdiction; and
- partnerships with Producer Responsibility Organisations, recycling companies, non-governmental organisations, cooperatives, traditional leadership structures, schools and community groups.

6. Policy Objectives

- Reduce the quantity of recyclable materials disposed of as residual waste.
- Promote separation at source and clean recycling streams.
- Provide a fair, safe and transparent system for receiving, weighing, recording, storing and selling recyclables.
- Support local reclaimers and community-based collectors through registration, training, PPE and access to markets where resources allow.
- Align recycling operations with EPR schemes and registered Producer Responsibility Organisations.
- Improve environmental health, cleanliness and public awareness.

- Generate reliable recycling data for management decisions, SDBIP reporting, IWMP reporting and Council oversight.
- Support local economic development, poverty alleviation and decent work opportunities in the recycling value chain.

7. Guiding Principles

- Waste hierarchy: disposal is a last resort after avoidance, reuse, recycling and recovery options have been considered.
- Polluter pays and producer responsibility: producers, generators and users must contribute to responsible post-consumer management.
- Transparency: all incoming and outgoing materials must be weighed, recorded and reconciled.
- Safety and dignity: recycling must not expose workers, collectors or the public to unacceptable health and safety risks.
- Inclusivity: waste collectors and informal reclaimers must be progressively integrated into formal municipal and EPR-linked recycling systems.
- Environmental protection: recycling sites must prevent nuisance, pollution, fires, vermin, litter, odour and stormwater contamination.

8. Ulundi Buy-Back Centre Operational Framework

8.1 Function of the Buy-Back Centre

The Buy-Back Centre serves as a municipal recycling hub that links households, businesses, institutions, community collectors, reclaimers and recycling markets. Its functions include receiving, weighing, sorting, storing, baling where applicable, selling and reporting on recyclable materials.

8.2 Location and Accessibility

- The facility must be accessible to registered collectors and service vehicles, while not causing nuisance to residents, businesses or public facilities.

8.3 Operating Hours

Operating hours must be approved by the Municipality and displayed clearly at the facility. Unless otherwise determined by the Municipal Manager or delegated official, the standard hours are:

- Monday to Friday: 08:00 to 16:00.

- Saturday: 08:00 to 12:00.
- Closed on Sundays and public holidays, unless authorised for special programmes or events.

8.4 Weighing and Payment Controls

- All materials must be weighed on a calibrated scale before acceptance and before dispatch to buyers or recyclers.
- Each transaction must record date, collector or supplier details, material type, weight, price rate, total value and responsible official.
- No official may manipulate weights, rates or records, accept unauthorised benefits, or trade municipal recyclable materials for personal gain.

9. Recyclable Materials

Materials accepted by the Buy-Back Centre must be based on safety, storage capacity, market demand, EPR arrangements, available equipment and Council-approved operating procedures.

Category	Examples	Conditions for Acceptance
Paper and cardboard	Office paper, newspaper, magazines, cardboard, K4	Must be clean and dry; separated by grade where required.
Plastics	PET bottles, HDPE containers, LDPE film, PP and other marketable plastics	Must be empty and reasonably clean; separated by polymer or buyer requirements where possible.
Metals	Steel cans, aluminium cans	Must not contain hazardous residues or pressurised containers.
Glass	Bottles and jars	Must be empty; separated by colour where required by buyer.

MATERIAL NOT ALLOWED FOR RECYCLING OR AT THE BUY BACK CENTRE

- Healthcare risk waste, sharps, blood-contaminated materials, nappies or sanitary waste.

- Hazardous waste, chemicals, pesticides, solvents, asbestos, paint residues, contaminated oil containers or unknown substances.
- General residual waste mixed with recyclables.
- Dirty, wet or contaminated recyclables that cannot be safely handled or economically recycled.
- Laminates and mixed-material items that have no available market, unless accepted under an approved EPR arrangement.
- Broken glass mixed with general waste or any material that creates an immediate injury risk.
- Stolen goods or materials suspected to have been unlawfully obtained. Such cases must be escalated according to municipal procedures and applicable law.

10. Price List and Tariff Management

The price paid for recyclable materials must be based on Council-approved rates, market conditions, available budget, buyer prices, transport costs and financial sustainability. Prices must be reviewed at least annually and may be adjusted more frequently by Council or delegated authority where market prices materially change.

Material	Grade / Description	Unit
PET	Clear / coloured bottles	kg
HDPE	Natural / coloured	kg
Mixed plastics	Marketable mixed plastic	kg
Cardboard	K4 or approved grade	kg
Paper	Common mix / office paper / newspaper	kg
Steel cans	Clean cans	kg

Aluminium	Cans or approved aluminium scrap	kg
Glass	Bottle glass by agreed grade	kg
Other approved material	As approved by Municipality	kg / item

11. Registration and Integration of Collectors

The Municipality must progressively register and support collectors and reclaimers who supply recyclable materials to municipal recycling initiatives. Registration is intended to improve safety, communication, recordkeeping, accountability and access to opportunities; it must not be used to unfairly exclude poor or vulnerable collectors.

- Maintain a register of collectors, cooperatives and community groups that supply the Buy-Back Centre.
- Issue identification cards or proof of registration where feasible.
- Provide induction on facility rules, accepted materials, weighing procedures, occupational health and safety, fire prevention and prohibited materials.
- Facilitate access to PPE such as gloves, masks, reflective clothing, aprons and boots where resources, partnerships or EPR support allow.
- Promote fair treatment, non-discrimination, child protection and respect for the dignity of all collectors.
- Support integration with EPR schemes, local recyclers and recognised waste picker registration initiatives where applicable.

12. Health, Safety and Environmental Management

- Workers and collectors must use appropriate PPE when handling recyclables.
- Materials must be stored in a manner that prevents fire risks, stormwater pollution, vermin, odour, windblown litter and injury.
- Flammable, sharp, hazardous or unknown materials must be isolated and handled according to applicable procedures.
- No burning of waste is permitted at the facility.
- The facility must be cleaned regularly and must have suitable signage, demarcated areas and access control.

13. Partnerships and Market Development

The Municipality may enter into lawful partnerships to improve recycling performance, support collectors, secure equipment, provide public education and access reliable markets. Potential partners include Producer Responsibility Organisations, recycling companies, local businesses, schools, traditional leadership structures, NGOs, community-based organisations and government departments.

- Existing and potential initiatives may include mobile recycling collection, training, PPE support, trolleys, bags, cages, skips, balers, signage and awareness campaigns.
- Any partnership involving municipal funds, assets, revenue, land or long-term obligations must comply with SCM, MFMA, legal and Council approval requirements.
- Partnerships must include clear roles, reporting obligations, ownership of materials, data sharing, dispute resolution and termination clauses.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

Role Player	Key Responsibilities
Council	Approve the policy, budget allocations and amendments; exercise oversight.
Municipal Manager	Ensure implementation, assign delegations, resolve interpretation disputes and enforce compliance.
Director: Community Services	Provide strategic leadership, ensure alignment with IDP, IWMP, SDBIP and legislation, and report to management and Council structures.
Waste Management Unit	Operate or oversee the Buy-Back Centre, maintain records, support collectors, enforce site rules and compile reports.
Supply Chain Management / Legal Services	Support compliant procurement, contracting, MOUs and partnership arrangements.
Collectors, reclaimers and suppliers	Comply with site rules, deliver acceptable materials, avoid prohibited materials and respect safety procedures.
Recycling companies / PROs	Provide market access, collection, data, capacity support and compliance with EPR or contractual requirements.

15. Recordkeeping, Monitoring and Reporting

The Municipality must maintain records for all recycling activities.

- Register of collectors and cooperatives participating in the programme.
- training, PPE and awareness campaign records.
- Monthly and quarterly performance reports for management, SDBIP, IWMP and Council oversight.

16. Performance Indicators

Indicator	Frequency	Responsible Unit
Tonnes of recyclables received by material type	Monthly	Waste Management
Tonnes of recyclables sold or transferred to approved recyclers	Monthly	Waste Management
Number of registered collectors or cooperatives supported	Quarterly	Waste Management
Number of awareness campaigns or stakeholder engagements	Quarterly	Community Services

17. Awareness, Education and Behaviour Change

The Municipality must promote public awareness on separation at source, litter prevention, illegal dumping prevention, recycling opportunities and the environmental, health and economic benefits of recycling. Awareness programmes may target households, schools, businesses, supermarkets, traditional areas, municipal events, wards and public facilities.

18. Compliance and Enforcement

- Unauthorised removal, sale or private trading of municipal recyclables is prohibited.
- The Municipality may refuse contaminated, hazardous, stolen, unsafe or non-marketable materials.
- The Municipality may suspend facility operations temporarily in the event of fire, flooding, labour unrest, safety risks, equipment failure, emergency or serious non-compliance.

19. Review, Amendment and Repeal

This policy must be reviewed annually, or earlier where required by legislative changes, Council resolutions. Council may amend or repeal this policy as it deems necessary.