



RECYCLE
NAMIBIA FORUM

Taking hands today for a cleaner Namibia tomorrow

Informational Booklet

RECYCLING AND WASTE

A handy introduction
to recycling and waste



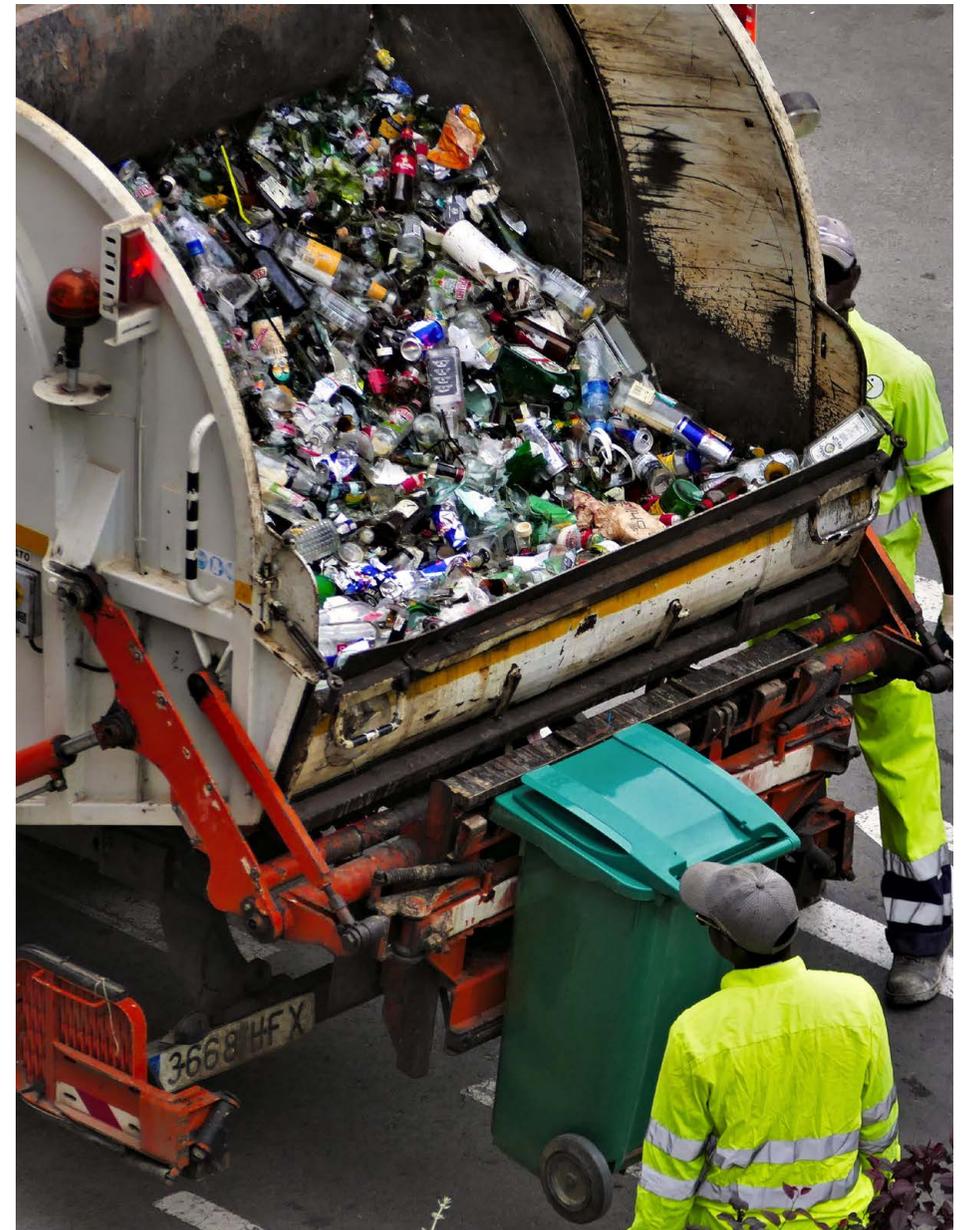
THERE IS NO “AWAY”

Every item bought, must go “somewhere” once it has served its original purpose. And whether it is reused, repurposed or recycled, it still will end up somewhere.

So, how much waste do we send to the Kupferberg Landfill? Residents in Windhoek each produce between 2 to 3 kg of waste **every day**. This results in around 7000 tons of waste taken by City of Windhoek Solid Waste Management to Kupferberg Landfill every month.

And Kupferberg Landfill is rapidly running out of space and needs to be expanded in the near future, hence City of Windhoek’s objective of “Zero Waste to Landfill”. The cost of expanding Kupferburg runs into millions of Namibian Dollars.

It is an alarming fact that close on **50% of what goes to dumpsites and landfills, could have been recycled**. However, after being piled in the dumpster truck, many recyclable items may be contaminated and crushed in the process, reducing its value. Nevertheless, a team at the landfill site is tasked to retrieve recyclables from the daily deluge of waste.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The best solution for all is to separate your household waste at source – namely at your home or office.

In Windhoek and Swakopmund, there are a number of options to recycle. Some offer household recycling (separation at source) or collection points at schools and retail outlets.

It may be a challenge to actively recycle if you have no recyclable waste collector in your area, but then options to reuse, reduce and repurpose (what you buy, how it is packaged and how you can give it a new purpose) should be encouraged.

Alternatively, you do have other options for your recyclables: City of Windhoek has opened a buy-back centre behind the SWAPO Headquarters in Katutura, whilst several collection points such as at Dagbreek School and Moreson School are also available. You are welcome to drop your recyclables there as it also generates much needed income for the schools.

You can also place your recyclables in the igloos located at a number of Shoprite outlets.



In our current economy, we take materials from the Earth, make products from them, and eventually throw them away as waste – the process is linear. In a circular economy, by contrast, we stop waste being produced in the first place.

– Ellen MacArthur Foundation –

WHY IS RECYCLING IMPORTANT?

Recycling helps to protect our environment.

- It reduces the need to find and process raw materials to create new products and items
- It reduces the volumes of waste that is sent to landfills, dumpsites and incinerators (where it is burnt)
- It conserves natural resources, and prevents pollution
- It saves energy, and creates employment

Recycling also plays a major role in moving from a linear economy (make, use and discard) towards a circular economy where every effort is made to reuse or repurpose items to finally being recycled, and in that way divert it from ending up at either a dumpsite or a landfill.

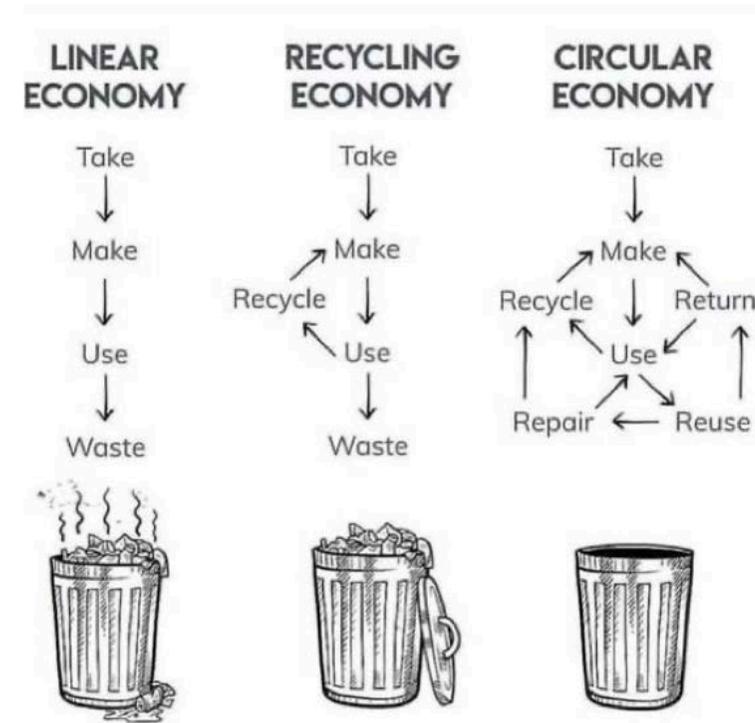


Image courtesy of zeloop.net

DID YOU KNOW?

Recyclables are categorized, and often branded, with the recycling image of three arrows, officially known as the Mobius Loop. This symbol indicates that a product can be recycled, but not necessarily that it has been made from recycled materials. This well-known symbol was created in 1970 by a young university student, Gary Anderson, who won a contest to raise environmental awareness.



RECYCLING IS EXPENSIVE

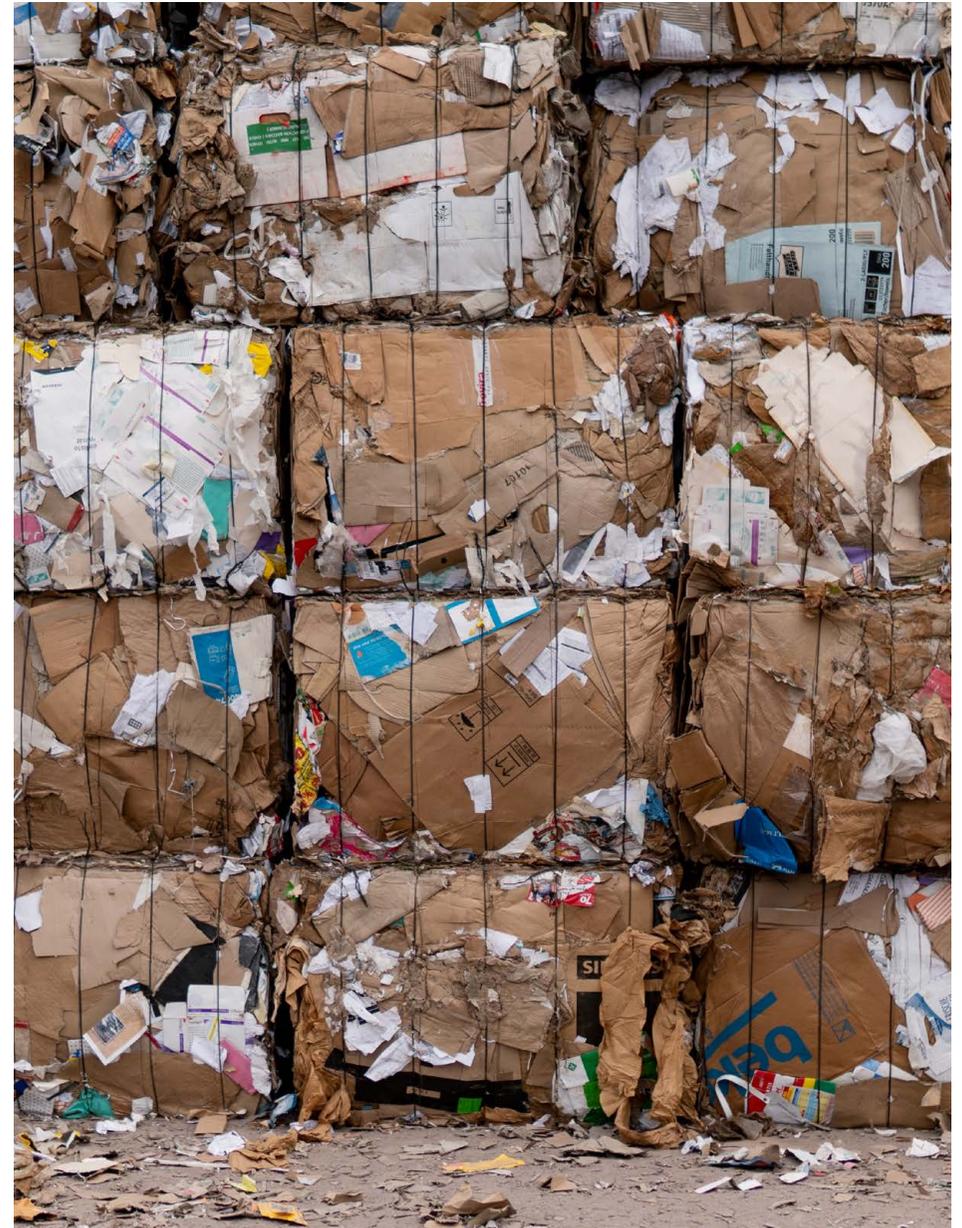
Recyclables have to travel a long way – at great expense.

Nearly all recyclables collected in Namibia are sorted, baled and transported to recycling companies in neighbouring countries, such as South Africa. This presents not only a challenge in terms of costs, but also market related issues, such as depending on permits being issued, or saturated markets, with load shedding in South Africa having a great impact on the volumes processed at recycling companies due to reduced operating times.

DID YOU KNOW?

The largest waste management company in Namibia, Rent-A-Drum, sent a total of 13 600 tons of recyclables to South Africa in 2022. A further 3 400 tons was recycled here in Namibia at Namibia Polymer Recyclers in Okahandja and turned into new products such as irrigation pipes, refuse bags etc.

For more information, visit www.rent-a-drum.com.na and www.ppnam.com



HOW CAN WE SEND LESS WASTE TO LANDFILL?

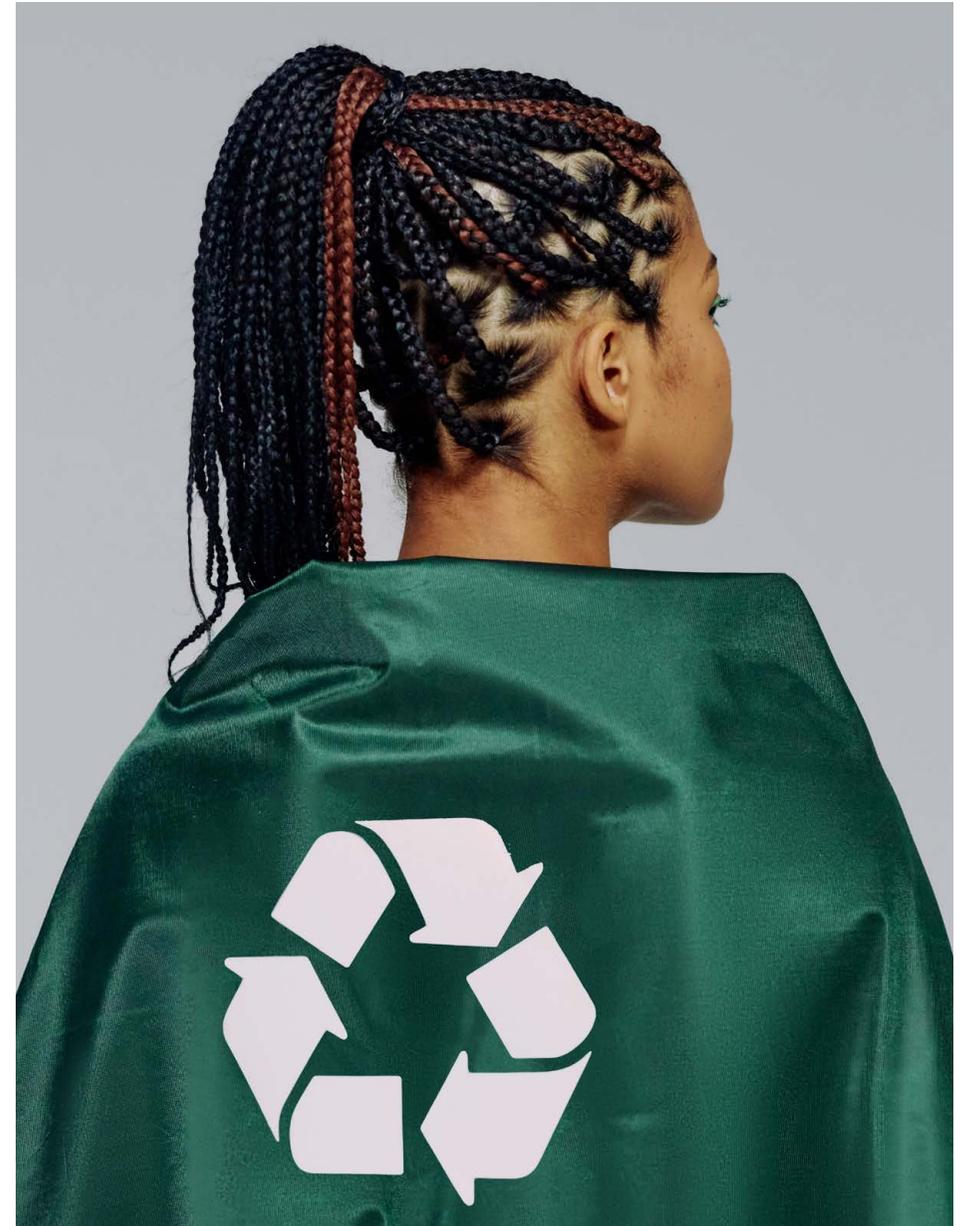
Rethink what you buy! Do you need it or want it? Can I buy this in bulk? Is the product available with less packaging? Is it recyclable or made from recyclable materials?

Reuse it! Can it serve a new purpose? The internet has some brilliant ideas on how to reuse items and turn it into new ones.

Repair it! We are a throw-away society – and before adding an item to go to a dumpsite, see if it (or parts thereof) can be repaired or reused.

Re-gift it! Does not fit anymore or you have no use for it anymore? There is always someone somewhere that would need and appreciate such items – check charity shops and support goodwill initiatives in your community.

Recycle it! It is the right thing to do when an item has no further purpose.



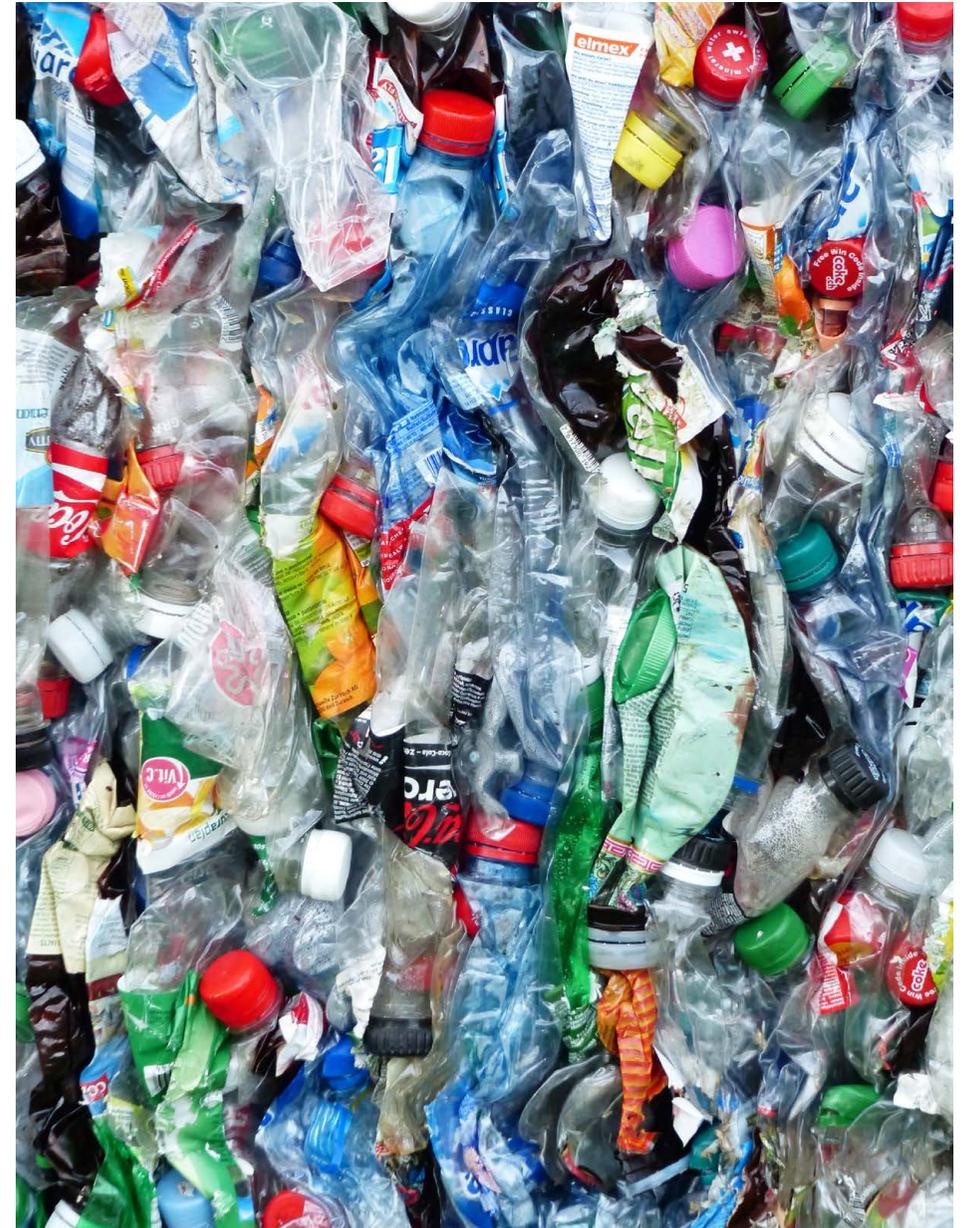
WHAT CAN WE RECYCLE?

PLASTICS

- Plastic bottles such as for beverages and water
- Plastic food containers (peanut butter, syrup, jams etc)
- Harder plastic containers such as shampoo, shower gel and bubblebath bottles, laundry detergent, bleach, household cleaning materials, etc
- Clear plastics, such as shopping bags, bags used for fruit/vegetable packaging, school book covers, and clingwrap (household as well as the wrapping of 6-pack drinks and cans)
- Harder plastics such as crates, bins, buckets and bottle caps

Recycling limit

New scientific testing has shown that PET and HDPE which comprise around 90% of all plastic bottles, can be recycled and reused at least ten times.



WHAT CAN WE RECYCLE? continued

ALL TYPE OF CANS

- Aluminium cans (beverages/drinks)
- Food cans and tins
- Deodorant / spray cans

Interesting fact

Aluminium cans currently fetch the highest price of all recyclables, and is therefore a valuable commodity to collect for recycling.

Recycling limit

All metal cans are infinitely recyclable.



GLASS

All type of glass bottles (drinks, food, condiments) and glass jars can be recycled.

Interesting fact

There is no need to separate glass by colour.

Recycling limit

The long-lasting nature of glass also means that glass can be recycled forever. It never wears out as a raw material and can be remanufactured into new glass containers again and again.

WHAT CAN WE RECYCLE? continued

PAPER

Paper is separated into four different categories:

- Glossy (such as posters, leaflets, etc)
- White paper (office papers)
- Magazines
- Newspaper

Carton/Cardboard also falls under the Paper category, and is divided into:

- Carton box (corrugated on the inside)
- Common mixed carton waste (cereal, coffee creamer, pasta etc boxes)
- Egg cartons
- Tetra Pak (milk / juice cartons)
- Poly Board (without a foil layer on the inside)

Recycling limit

Every time paper is recycled, the fibres shorten. It is estimated paper can be recycled 4-6 times.



DID YOU KNOW?

You cannot recycle shiny and glittery Christmas or birthday wrapping paper. It contains certain chemicals and dyes, and sometimes even glitter, that cannot be removed during the recycling process. Rather opt for plain paper.

WHAT CAN WE RECYCLE? continued

E-WASTE

Electronic waste is currently the fastest growing waste stream. E-waste includes all products running with a power cord/plug or a battery. This means a wide range of electrical products such as toys, kitchen and household appliances, electrical toothbrushes, power tools, laptops, cell phones, printers etc.

According to research, globally generated e-waste will reach some 53 million tonnes by 2025. This is a growth rate of 30% since 2016. Only 20% of global e-waste is currently responsibly recycled each year. The remainder is either thrown away, burned or recycled informally creating health and safety risks and negatively impacting the environment.

Almost all e-waste can be recycled, a process in which materials are recovered, then segregated and reused as secondary raw materials for the production of new equipment and products.

For many electrical appliances, it is possible to extend the lifecycle of the product by repairing it and especially for professional IT equipment, reuse of the product or



components is a realistic option. Reuse prolongs the lifecycle which reduces the demand for new products and components, and space on landfills.

Get rid of your e-waste in a responsible manner, by contacting either e-waste or scrap metal collectors (have a look at our Green Directory). A company such as NamiGreen (RNF member) has a number of collection points across Namibia – have a look at (<https://www.namigreen.com/dropoff>)

NOT FIT FOR RECYCLING

Some things can not be recycled, so our best option is to limit our buying of such items.

- Windowpanes, mirrors, and vehicle glass
- Wine / beer / drinking glasses (made of plated glass)
- Glass bottles that were burnt on dump and landfill sites
- Ceramic and porcelain crockery plates, cups and mugs
- Pots, pans and steel household items (forks etc.)
- Clothing, fabric, shoes
- Paint cans
- Used pizza boxes (contaminated)



USEFUL INFORMATION

Some items are so hazardous that it can't be disposed of in our bins. So if you can't recycle it, and you can't bin it, what do you do?

Light bulbs

Light bulbs (especially fluorescent lamps) should not go into your refuse bin. Dagbreek School offers a collection point for light bulbs in Windhoek.

Batteries

Used household batteries are harmful to the environment so rather buy rechargeable batteries. Make sure your used batteries are placed in the collection bins at Pick n Pay and Pupkewitz Megabuild (Windhoek and the coast).

DID YOU KNOW?

Light bulbs and household batteries are not recycled but disposed of at the hazardous waste sites which are located at landfills in Windhoek and Walvis Bay



Cooking oil

Used cooking oil is harmful to both humans and the environment and should not be poured down the drain. A local company, BEE Energy Efficient Namibia turns old cooking oil into a biofuel. (Have a look on www.facebook.com/biofuelnamibia/)

Medication

Old and expired medication should not be flushed down your toilet. It can harm the water supply. It should preferably also not be thrown into the rubbish bin. Check with your pharmacy/chemist whether they can assist in correctly disposing of old medication.

REFUSE DERIVED FUEL PLANT – RDF

Rent-A-Drum opened its Refuse Derived Fuel plant in March 2017, where items which are not traditionally recyclable are used to provide energy.

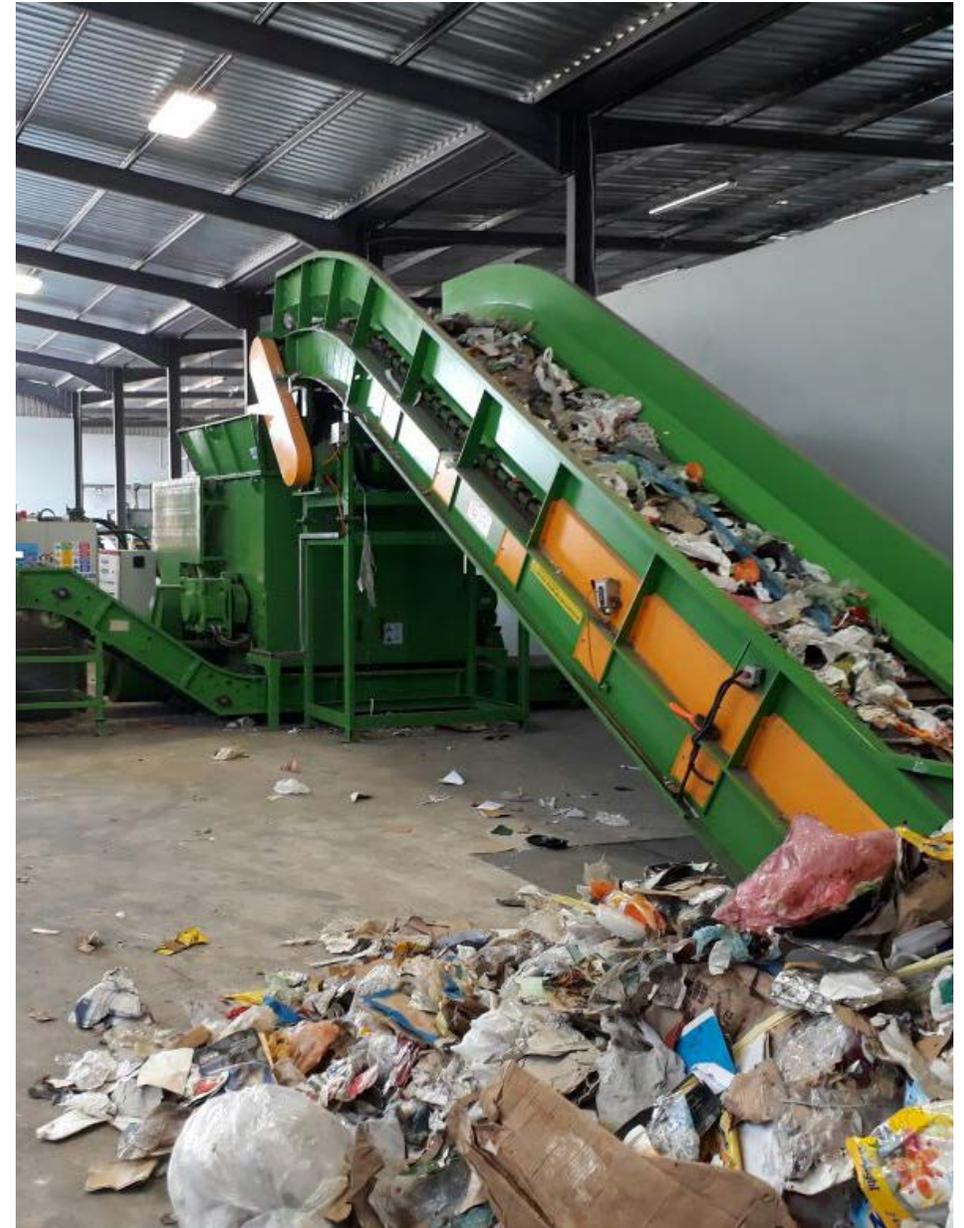
The RDF plant currently sends around 80 tons of shredded waste and 5 tons of rubber shavings to the Ohorongo Cement plant near Otjiwarongo every month.

If you have a Rent-A-Drum outlet in your town, you can add these to your recycling bin:

- Styrofoam food trays
- Food punnets (vegetables/fruit)
- Dog and pet food bags (without foil)
- Woven plastic bags
- Plastic seedling trays
- Tetra Pack containers
- X rays

Learn more here:

www.rent-a-drum.com.na



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

BE A CONSCIOUS CONSUMER

A Conscious Consumer is someone who thinks about their purchases and sustainability before they buy anything.

With a few easy steps you can make a difference and be an eco-warrior!

EASY TO IMPLEMENT IDEAS

At home

- Replace lightbulbs with LED bulbs, which reduces electrical usage
- Reduce your water consumption where possible (use low-flow taps, water your garden early in the morning etc), take shorter showers instead of a bath
- Limit the use of airconditioners by rather opening windows (and if possible, build your home so that you can optimize natural light and airflow)
- Ensure that your outside lighting and lamps (with eco-friendly bulbs or solar) point downwards or sideways, to reduce light pollution (it greatly affects nocturnal animals)



Shop wisely

- Shop in bulk, and try to avoid excess packaging;
- Support local (organic) markets and zero waste initiatives (such as the weekly Bio Market and Zero Waste Store (RNF Member) in Windhoek);
- Encourage your local shops/retailers to include Namibian grown produce instead of importing food items from outside (larger carbon footprint).
- Invest in reusable shopping bags and refillable water containers/bottles. Also opt for buying food items loose instead of already packaged (usually with Styrofoam/plastic).
- Compost vegetables and food scraps – for use in your own vegetable/herb garden (or start a worm farm!)

WHAT CAN YOU DO? continued

Get involved

Support and actively participate in environmental events, such as Earth Day and Earth Hour, Global Recycling Day, Global Clean Up Day etc.

Have a look at our [Green Calendar](#).

Get creative

- If you cannot use an item anymore, remember to regift or donate it. Support your local charities
- Be innovative and creative and give a second (useful) purpose to items by upcycling and showcasing it!
- Make sure that you only discard items after looking at other options to avoid sending it to landfill (repair it, repurpose, regift or recycle it).
- Remember that digital clutter (overload of unnecessary emails, documentation etc) is also a form of littering, and an annual digital decluttering can be useful!

DID YOU KNOW?

Every action today has an impact on the future.
Make sure you Recycle and Rethink Tomorrow.



GET IN TOUCH

Contact me if you need any information or have any projects planned for the upcoming year that you need assistance with.

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*We must become
the change
we wish to see
in the world.*

~ Mahatma Gandhi ~



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TAKING HANDS TODAY TOWARDS A CLEANER, GREENER NAMIBIA TOMORROW

We would like to thank our RNF members for their input and content in compiling this document.

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