



Just Transition in Waste Management: Empowering Informal Workers in Accra, Ghana

1. *Submitting organization:*

C40 Cities

2. *Short description of the study:*

Objective: The case study will draw on the work conducted in Accra, Ghana, with the support of C40 Cities, between 2021 and 2024. It will explore how to plan and deliver a just transition for informal workers in the waste management sector based on the successful experience of Accra. It will demonstrate how a city can recognise the essential role of and partner with the informal sector, including workers associations, to facilitate the sector's transition towards a green and just economy, safeguard workers' rights, improve working conditions, protect them from increasing climate impacts while supporting climate action to emissions and improving essential services and health outcomes for all urban residents.

Building on Accra's experience in strengthening partnerships with informal waste workers and range of visual and other assets from the programme of work, this case study will provide transferable recommendations to national policy-makers for engaging with informal workers, improving working conditions, expanding social protection, enhancing employment stability, and building trust between stakeholders for a successful just transition. By doing so, this case study will also respond to the gaps and challenges identified by the participants of the first dialogue under the United Arab Emirates just transition work programme (as referenced in the Informal Summary Report by the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, 15 July 2024), inform the development of the first legally binding Global Plastics Treaty and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

C40 Cities will work closely with KCI to ensure the scope of the case study is valuable for key audiences. C40 will consult the City of Accra in the process of developing this work and other local stakeholders as and when needed.

Problem description: Accra, with a population of 5.4 million, was named the world's fastest-growing economy. However, this vibrant city faces challenges from rapid urban growth, affecting waste management services, and from increasing climate impacts such as urban flooding and heat waves.

The City produces around 900,000 metric tonnes of solid waste annually and receives waste from other nations, including 15 million garments weekly and discarded electronics. This waste overload, coupled with limited landfill space, threatens residents' health. Waste clogs waterways, and open-pit burning releases toxic smoke, causing health issues and premature deaths. Waste from just two of the city's landfills generates around 800,000 tonnes of CO₂ annually.

About 80% of Accra's workforce is employed in the informal sector, with 30% of this group



working in waste management. These workers are on the frontline, dealing with waste and climate impacts, collecting about 51% of waste in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area. Many informal waste workers are women, migrants and youth and due to several intersecting factors like structural discrimination or lack of legal protections their vulnerability is exacerbated.

Informal workers provide essential services in key climate sectors, yet their contributions are often un(der) recognised. They frequently lack access to social protection and are often marginalised from decision making processes, leading to entrenched discrimination or misinformed perceptions of their work.

3. *Geographical Region:*

Accra, Ghana

4. *Area of climate policy:*

Waste management;

5. *Short description of the policy(ies):*

In Accra, C40 supported a policy framework development to enhance collaboration between the city and the informal waste sector. Previously, the lack of guiding policy hindered inclusive engagement and equitable impacts of climate action. This framework, based on a needs assessment, aimed to address key gaps and identify critical policy actions. Since its creation in 2022, Accra has launched several initiatives, including a pilot social insurance scheme registering over 200 informal workers and supported the establishment of informal workers' cooperatives to improve workers' rights and livelihoods. Additionally, a project supported by the International Organization for Migration Ghana, is currently creating a City liaison to further institutionalise the partnership between the City and informal workers, including migrant workers, and strengthen engagement, responding to the needs identified in the assessment. Lessons from Accra's experience have been since replicated in other C40 member cities including Freetown, Addis Ababa and Dar es Salaam.

6. *Work programme Area to be covered by the Study:*

Just transition of the workforce and creation of decent work and quality jobs ; Assessment and analysis of the impacts of the implementation of response measures (with a view to understanding the positive and negative impacts);

7. *If the case study will cover assessment and analysis of the impacts of the implementation of response measures, the impacts to be studied:*

Social; Economic;

8. *If the case study will cover assessment and analysis of the impacts of the implementation of response measures, the type of assessment (Qualitative/Quantitative/Both):*

Qualitative



9. *If the case study will cover assessment and analysis of the impacts of the implementation of response measures, the methodology or tool used for impact assessment:*

One of the C40 Inclusive Climate Action and Just Transition tools that will be utilised in the case study is a needs assessment that in the example of Accra looked at the needs, challenges, and barriers to engaging and collaborating with informal waste actors. Using an inclusive and participatory workshop approach, the assessment involved separate workshops with both informal waste actors and the city team. The assessment also aimed to identify key stakeholders for institutionalising informal sector engagement, examine the strengths and challenges of informal waste sector actors, and pinpoint gaps and barriers in their relationship with the city. Additionally, it sought to identify capacity challenges faced by both the city team and informal sector actors and provided recommendations for suitable, efficient, and cost-effective capacity development to meet the identified needs.

10. *Status of proposed case study:*

The project is delivered and outcomes were published but the case study will need to be written up in a suitable format with the help of KCI - link to the needs assessment and the policy framework added below.

11. *If the case study is completed and published, link to the case study:*

Needs assessment:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zTQkMwyoNMGnpp4HYqGXcsxllkpuaaNK/view?usp=sharing> Policy framework:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mCjgEtQyLI42Akbsw2w9eCEH5gDm64DO/view?usp=sharing>

12. *Elaboration on how the submitter would contribute to the development of the case study:*

The case study will be developed by C40 Cities in collaboration with KCI to align with KCI's goals, work plan, and target audience. C40 Cities' team will draft the case study and provide minor financial resources for a shareable, designed report if needed.

C40 is also open to working with KCI to explore alternative focuses for the case study, drawing on our pilots in other cities to align with KCI's priorities.