



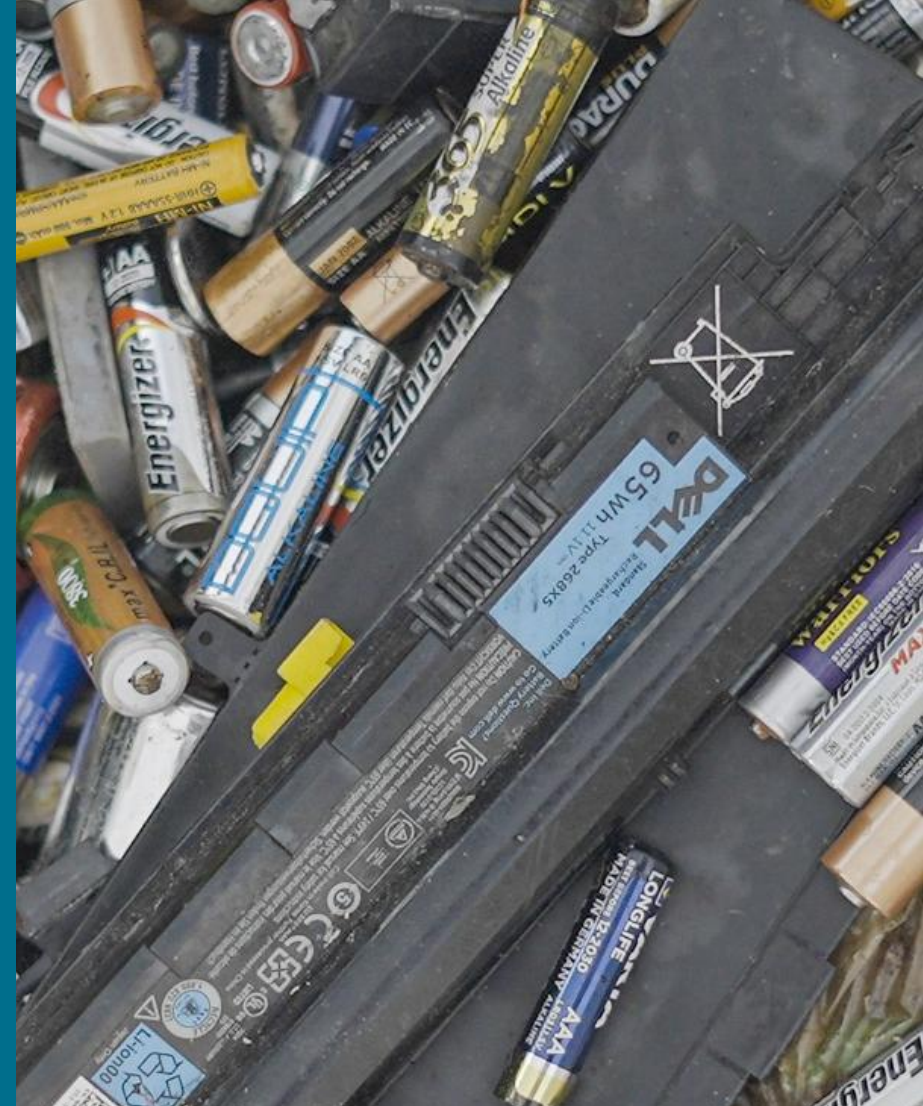
Lessons in e-Waste Circularity

Building an Enabling WEEE Management Landscape for South Africa

21 May 2026

16th Symposium on ICTs, Environment, Climate Change and Circular Economy

Susanne Karcher: CEI Project Lead



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO



Sustainable Recycling Industries (2020-2025): Departure Point for CEI...

Policy

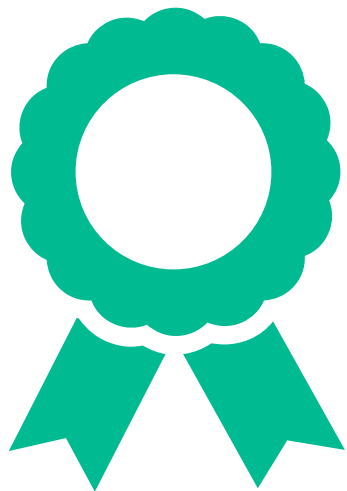
- Policy gazetted and the costing framework established
- WEEE Municipal Compass
- eGOV Strategy

Norms and Standards

- Draft voluntary suite of N&S alongside auditor training
- Conformity Assessment Scheme design

Business

- WEEEareSA (WEEE masterclass and general awareness)
- Reports on business incentives and small-scale e-waste facilities



Hazardous fractions

- Lithium-ion batteries, solar panels and WEEE Plastics focus
- Webinar and workshop series and reports



**SUSTAINABLE
RECYCLING
INDUSTRIES**

Lessons learnt

Policy

- Must be systemic, grassroots, and focused on implementation and resource mobilisation/costing

Norms and Standards

- Needs to be activity-based
- Clear pathways for informal waste picker integration
- Voluntary towards mandatory

Business

- Training and curriculum development: accreditation challenges
- Limited scope for SMME development due to license requirements

Hazardous fractions

- Challenging definitions of WEEE classification and parts thereof
- Increasing flows related to the Just Energy Transition

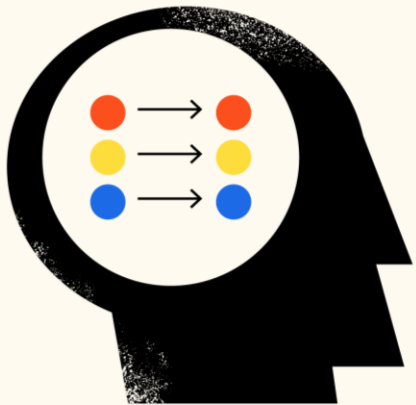


**THE LESSONS WE
CARRIED OVER**

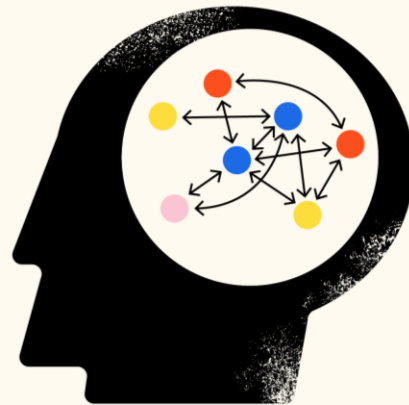
The Paradigm Shift: 2024 Baseline vs. 2029 Target State

	2024 Baseline	2029 Target State
Policy	Fragmented execution, unclear municipal mandates, undefined asset release strategy.	Unified National WEEE Policy Costing Framework enacted via the multidisciplinary WEEEPSC.
Norms	Voluntary standards, uneven playing field, cherry-picking of high-value materials.	Mandatory Conformity Assessment Scheme (CAS) with ring-fenced decontamination requirements.
Treatment	Largely informal, undocumented, and operating with high environmental and health risks.	Formalized integration of waste pickers (ARO, SAWPA) into PRO networks with standardized operational protocols (SOPs).
Data	Incomplete SAWIC data, opaque PRO reporting, siloed customs statistics.	Interoperable, internationally verified value-chain baseline using a standardized Material Accounting Tool.

Systems, Circularity, and Strategic Coordination



LINEAR THINKING

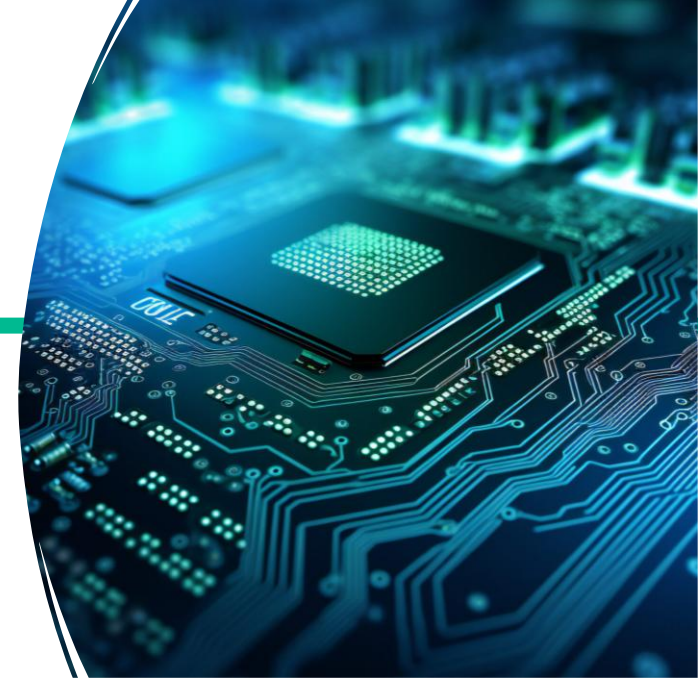


SYSTEMS THINKING



CEI : Building on & Expanding the Scope of SRI

- Circular Economy Driven
 - ✓ Moving beyond recycling and materials recovery
 - ✓ Repair and Refurbishment within scope, **Higher R options**
 - ✓ Spotlight on entire WEEE Value Chain and all Stakeholders in it (incl. scrap metal dealers)
- Follows **system pressures**: focus on renewable energy related WEEE
- **ACEN** as the subcontracting party delivered through SRI implementation partner team:
 - Susanne Karcher (Envirosense)
 - Paul Jones (LUMEC)
 - Aysha Lotter (Alembia)
- International **Technical Coordinator** team to assist all CEI Countries (Ghana, Egypt, South Africa)



Key Activities planned for CEI:

National e-Waste Policy

- Drive Implementation of Policy and Costing Framework for Activities
- Establishment of a WEEE PSC and wider Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Communicate policy objectives within Government tiers

Norms and Standards

- Develop industry driven fully fledged CAS
- Refine N&S to accommodate realities of different recycler practices
- Hardwire “decontamination” as an EPR obligation
- Make them ultimately mandatory
- Tool for PROs to create “Level Playing Field”

Key Activities planned for CEI:

Collection and Treatment

- Waste Reclaimer Specific WEEE Training
- Enabling environment for pilot projects
- Kickstart establishment of Recycler Association
- Research for treatment solutions of problematic fractions viable in South Africa

Monitoring

- Import and Production Statistics for EEE
- Data system mapping for the entire EEE/WEEE value chain
- Institutionalised monitoring: Data management framework, improvement of SAWIC, harmonised PRO reporting



Thank you for joining us!

*For a more one-on-one discussion
please contact us*

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