

SA PET industry offers support to Joburg recycling SMMEs

In the wake of the City of Ekurhuleni's new mandatory household recycling programme launched earlier this month, the South African PET recycling sector has stepped up to assist recycling SMMEs.



Serioplast administration and finance manager Leigh Fitzpatrick cuts the ribbon on a new baling machine under the watchful eye of PETCO chairman Casper Durandt (back, right) and representatives from beneficiary organisation CJU Environmental Management (in blue uniforms), as well as partners PETCO and the City of Ekurhuleni.

The development initiative, spearheaded by national recycling body PETCO and key players in the PET value chain, will see a number of small enterprises equipped to participate more effectively in the 'circular economy', by deriving value from post-consumer waste. This follows concerns from SMMEs and informal waste collectors that they would be sidelined by the new 'separation-at-source' scheme.

Earlier this month, PET plastic bottle converter Serioplast and the PET Recycling Company (PETCO) donated equipment – in the form of baling machines, industrial platform scales and signage – to Johannesburg-based SMMEs with the aims of improving the collection, weighing and baling of recyclable material for resale to recycling businesses. More beneficiaries are set to receive similar donations from PETCO in the coming weeks.

The Gauteng-based beneficiaries included Ekhuliza Gauteng Primary Cooperative and CJU Environmental Management in Boksburg and Lakhwisha Holdings in Vosloorus.



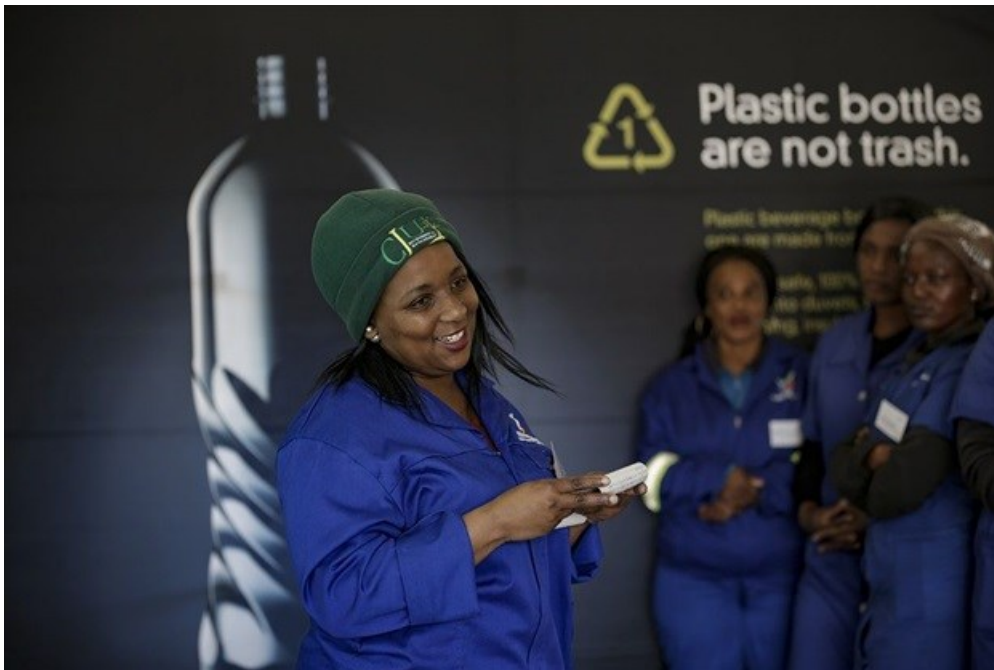
Freshly baled plastic bottles – ready for recycling – formed the backdrop to an event that saw the handover of industrial baling and weighing equipment to recycling SIMMEs in Johannesburg. The national PET Recycling Company (PETCO) and bottle converter Serioplast partnered to support small businesses in the wake of the mandatory recycling programme introduced by the City of Ekurhuleni. Pictured here at the event are (left) PETCO chairman Casper Durandt and (centre) Serioplast director Alessandro Innocenti.

Positive step forward

Speaking after the event, which was hosted in partnership with the City of Ekurhuleni, PETCO chief executive officer Cheri Scholtz said the citywide household recycling initiative was a positive step forward in creating a recycling consciousness among ordinary South Africans.

“It is also an important opportunity for local government and industry stakeholders to develop meaningful strategies for waste reduction, as well as an inclusive framework that facilitates participation and creates income-generating opportunities for businesses of all sizes,” she said.

Scholtz said PET recycling had been particularly effective in creating a 'circular economy', with plastic water and soft drink bottles offering post-consumer value to waste collectors and recyclers, while also reducing producers' need for virgin PET material.



CJU Environmental Management's Phumla Monono addresses guests during the handover of baling machines to recycling SMMEs at a ceremony in Johannesburg. CJU is one of the small business beneficiaries that have been equipped to better participate in the mandatory household recycling programme instituted by the City of Ekurhuleni earlier this month.

Training and mentorship critical

“The hard work and efforts of all players in the PET value chain – from brand owners and producers to individual waste pickers – allowed us to recycle 2.15 billion bottles in 2017.

“PETCO believes that the training and mentorship of waste entrepreneurs like those represented here today is critical in helping them to grow and sustain their businesses. Ultimately, this will stimulate economic growth, job creation and the development of our country as a whole.”

Serioplast director Alessandro Innocenti said, as a bottle converter, the company was aware of plastic's potentially negative environmental impact and that, instead of dumping bottles in landfill sites, it was vital to find ways of unlocking the value in waste and giving it new life.

“It's time we all start treating plastic like the valuable resource it is. Serioplast is proud to support PETCO's commitment to a green, inclusive economy that helps the environment and has a positive impact on local communities.”

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