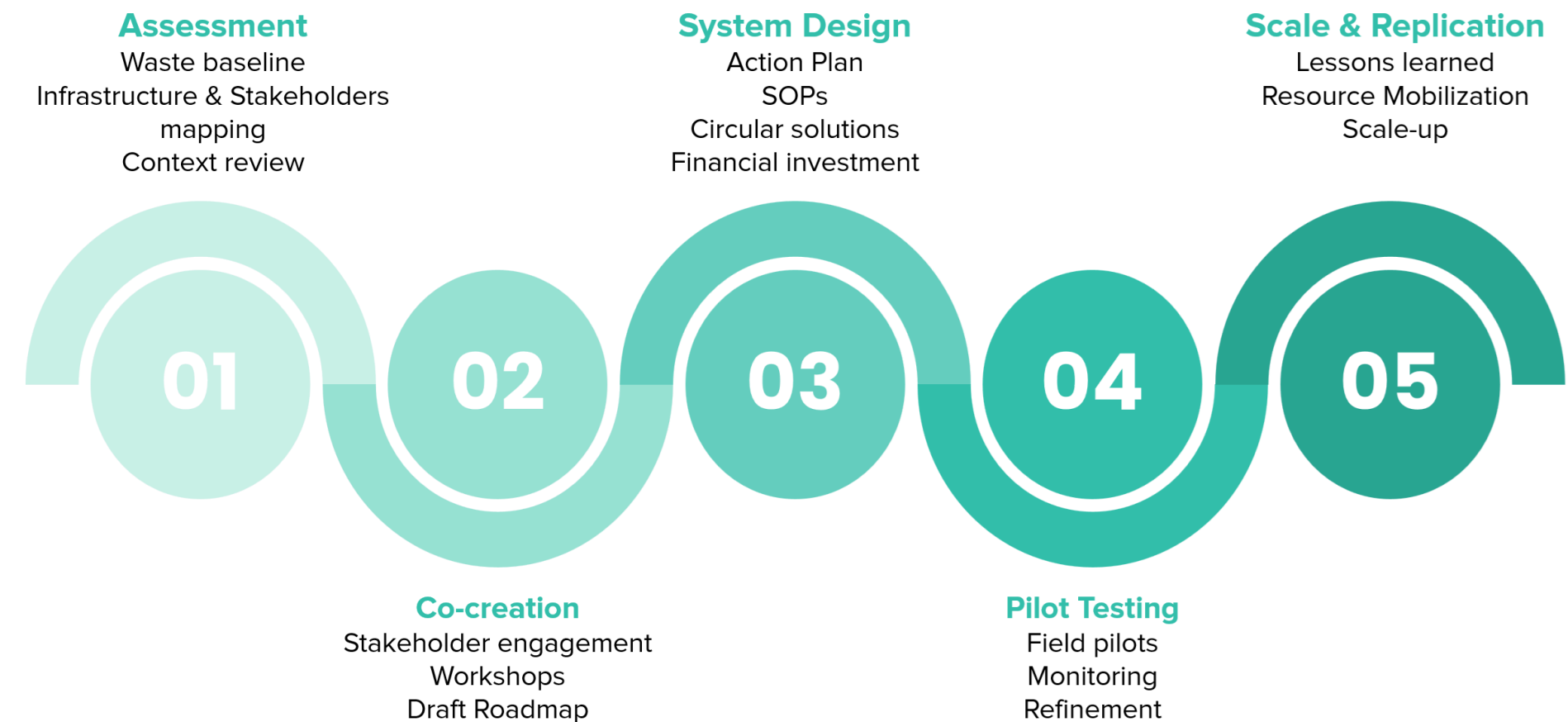


UNHCR Waste Management

What we do

- **UNHCR's Waste Management Programme** works to reduce waste and increase reuse, recovery and recycling across the humanitarian supply chain. By improving how relief items are sourced, distributed and managed at the end of their lifecycle, our aim is to minimize environmental impacts and support more sustainable operations.
- Rather than creating waste solutions ourselves, we seek to **connect humanitarian waste streams with existing local recycling and circular economy systems**. Partnerships with the private sector, technical experts and local stakeholders are therefore essential to developing practical, scalable waste management solutions that benefit the people we serve.

Methodology



Pilot programme



The programme started with assessments and pilot work in **Ethiopia, Mauritania** and **Chad**, looking at waste streams and the existing waste-management and recycling ecosystems in each context.



An important part of this approach is to look at waste not only as something to be disposed of but, where feasible, as a **potential resource**.



This means exploring whether materials can **re-enter value chains** and whether **viable business opportunities** can develop around their collection, recovery or recycling.



In some of the markets where we operate, strengthening these value chains may also create opportunities for **private-sector expertise, technology** and **investment** in the wider recycling sector.



Mauritania



Chad



Ethiopia

Inter-Agency Collaboration



WISE CIRCLE

Waste Innovation for Sustainable Emergencies & Collaborative Initiative for Resource & Circular Economy



Co-leads of the HLGSC

Humanitarian Leadership Group on Supply Chain



Partnerships



Member of [SWEEP](#)



Member of the [WREC Coalition](#)



Participant of [UNHRD's Harmless Plastic Project](#)

Funded by Novo Nordisk, DRRS/RVO, and UNHCR Innovation's [Environment and Climate Action Innovation Fund](#)



Resources

- [Waste Management Concept Note 2023](#)

This is an **initial planning document** that outlines a framework for managing and reducing waste across UNHCR operations through more sustainable and standardized practices.

- [Waste Management Report 2026](#)

This report presents **the results of the pilot phase** in three selected country operations (Ethiopia, Mauritania and Chad) and establishes the baseline for subsequent System Design and Pilot Testing, focusing on plastic solid waste.

→ [Read the Executive Summary.](#)

- [WREC Coalition Website](#)

This site provides **resources and guidance on the work of the WREC Coalition**, a collaborative initiative that promotes sustainable humanitarian logistics by reducing waste, pollution, and environmental impacts across supply chains.

Contact us

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