



Key insights

- Recognition and Safety Are Foundational: Formal recognition and ID cards support informal waste workers' access to social protection and financial services. Gaps in workplace injury protocols and PPE usage remain widespread. Locally relevant, simple safety training is essential to improve health outcomes and build trust across the value chain.
- Transparent Costing Supports Scalable Sourcing: Recyclers lack visibility beyond Tier 2, limiting understanding of the true costs of responsible sourcing. Key cost drivers include labor, transport, and worker welfare. A standardized costing methodology can guide investment decisions toward responsible sourcing and help lower costs over time through improved efficiency.
- Empowerment Requires a Shift in Narrative and Practice: Programs must be designed with, not just for, waste workers. Recognizing them as entrepreneurs and leaders supports dignity and long-term inclusion. Access to microcredit and support for business roles are key enablers of economic mobility.
- The Harmonized Framework Enables Regulatory Readiness: The Harmonized Framework aligns with CSDDD expectations and supports responsible sourcing due diligence. Companies using it can demonstrate leadership and shape emerging regulations. Proactive implementation positions brands ahead of compliance demands.



































































































