

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Municipal solid waste management plays an important role in the economic transformation of a country particularly mitigating the environmental and health risks posed by uncollected and untreated garbage. Management of municipal solid waste has always been a challenge in Uganda and one of the areas that require attention. Government of Uganda has made efforts both at national and local government levels aimed at improving the way Municipal solid waste is managed. This has mainly been through building the capacity of local governments to collect, transport, treat and dispose of garbage. Despite these interventions, challenges still persist in the management of municipal solid waste. This audit sought to examine the extent to which selected municipalities manage solid waste, identify the challenges faced, underlying causes and make recommendations to address them.

The audit focused on the activities and measures undertaken by the 17 municipalities in relation to planning for municipal solid waste activities: collection, transportation, treatment and disposal of the municipal solid waste generated, and activities of municipal solid waste data management. The audit covered activities undertaken in three financial years 2014/15, 2015/16, and 2016/17.

## KEY FINDINGS

Based on the procedures performed, it was observed that none of the seventeen (17) municipalities assessed were managing solid waste in a satisfactory manner. Ten (10) of the seventeen (17) municipalities were managing the function in a fairly satisfactory manner while seven (7) municipalities performed below expectation. The average score for municipalities with compost plants was 61.4% while the average score for municipalities without compost plants was 47.4%. Jinja and Arua Municipalities with a score of 48% and 51% respectively, were the lowest among the municipalities with compost plants while Mityana and Busia Municipalities with scores of 26% and 40%, respectively, were the lowest amongst those municipalities without compost plants. This level of performance can be explained by a number of weaknesses within the systems for managing municipal solid waste as highlighted below:

### 1. Adequacy and Enforcement of the Existing Legal Framework

Only four (4) out of a sample of seventeen (17) municipalities had solid waste management byelaws that were approved by both council and the Attorney General. In the absence of approved byelaws, the municipalities cannot effectively enforce good solid waste management practices.

### 2. Planning for municipal Solid waste management activities

Whereas the process of formulation of a National Solid Waste management policy commenced in 2012, the policy was still in draft form at the time of audit. Without an approved policy a national solid waste management strategy cannot be developed and as such the country is exposed to a risk of disjointed planning, duplication of activities and uncoordinated management of solid waste by key players.

Whereas municipalities developed and approved strategic plans to guide the management of municipal solid waste, a number of key activities in these plans had not been implemented by the time of audit. This was mainly because the plans were unrealistic and the municipalities also did not identify sources of funding for most of the planning activities. Examples where this was noted include Soroti, Tororo, Lira, Jinja, Fort Portal. Failure to implement planned activities negates the purpose of planning, and makes it difficult to transform and improve the municipal solid waste management function within these municipalities.

### **3. Collection and Transportation of solid waste**

The current estimated garbage collection level is forty percent (40%) of all the waste that is generated with the lowest collections noted in Hoima (8.5%), Gulu (20%), and Tororo (26%). This therefore implies that approximately sixty percent (60%) of all waste generated is not collected by the municipal system for appropriate treatment and disposal resulting in inconvenience to the public, environmental pollution, and posing a risk for public health. The low collection levels were attributed to insufficient and old collection skips, garbage bins and trucks.

### **4. Treatment of collected municipal solid waste**

Treatment of waste collected was not done in compliance with the NEMA solid waste management regulations or the compost plant operations manuals. In some cases the treatment process was found to be a source of pollution of the environment as was noted in Entebbe, Mityana, Gulu, and Tororo. This was mainly because of the weak supervision of the waste treatment processes.

### **5. Management of Solid Waste Data**

It was also noted that a number of key records and documents relating to management of municipal solid waste were either non-existent or not up-to-date, which affected other activities, particularly planning and decision making. This was noted in all the municipalities with Mityana and Busia as the worst performing in this area. This was due to weak system of monitoring and follow-up by NEMA and non-prioritisation of this activity by the municipalities.

### **6. Assessment of the impact of municipal solid waste activities on the environment**

None of the seventeen (17) municipalities undertook an annual audit of the effects of their activities on the environment for the 3-year period under review as required by the National Environment waste management regulations, partly because this activity was not provided for in the annual work plans and budgets of all the municipalities visited. There was also no evidence of follow-up by NEMA to enforce compliance with this regulation. Without a regular assessment of the effects of these activities against set benchmarks it is not possible to identify and promptly address any negative effects of the activities on the environment.

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Adequacy and Enforcement of the Existing Legal Framework

The Ministry of Lands should expedite the finalisation and approval of the national solid waste management policy. In addition, the ministry should devise means of harmonising the current municipal plans with the approved policy and national strategy.

All municipalities with draft byelaws should ensure that they are approved by both council and the Attorney General. In addition municipalities should devise ways of beefing up the current numbers of enforcement officers who oversee solid waste management. The enforcement function should also be streamlined to ensure that activities are well planned, implemented and records kept.

## 2. Planning for municipal solid waste management activities

As part of the strategic planning process, municipalities should endeavour to identify the funding sources and make deliberate efforts to realise the funds.

## 3. Collection and Transportation of Solid Waste

Municipalities should prioritise the procurement of skips and other collection equipment. They should also devise alternative cost-efficient waste collection methods and intensify the sensitisation of the public. Dumping should be closely supervised and interventions to mitigate effects of pollution should be implemented.

## 4. Treatment of collected municipal solid waste

Treatment should be done in compliance with the NEMA regulations and the compost plant operations manual.

## 5. Management of solid waste Data

Municipalities should ensure that all records in relation to solid waste management are kept and promptly updated. NEMA should also follow up with municipalities and ensure that they always have up-to-date records and data.

## 6. Assessment of the impacts of municipal solid waste activities on the environment

The municipalities should regularly budget and plan to undertake this activity in their budgets and activity plans. In addition, NEMA should follow-up and compel any non-compliant municipalities to undertake the audits.

## OVERALL AUDIT CONCLUSION

The management of municipal solid waste in Uganda is still a challenge as demonstrated by the majority of municipalities collecting less than 50% of the waste generated.

In order to realise the broader objectives of safeguarding and promoting public health by maintaining clean towns and protecting the environment, municipalities need to prioritise the management of solid waste in their annual plans as well as strengthen the monitoring, supervision and enforcement mechanisms. Making it a key performance indicator for the town clerks and other responsible officers could be one of the ways of raising its profile.