

## Circular Economy Solutions in Focus: Turning Waste to Value in Jamaica

*New position paper and stakeholder workshop highlight actions to protect biodiversity and strengthen resilience across the island*

**KINGSTON, JAMAICA** — Environmental Solutions Limited (ESL) has released a landmark position paper calling for Jamaica to accelerate its transition from a linear take–make–dispose waste system to a circular economy model. The paper, *Advancing a Circular Economy in Jamaica*, was developed under an initiative funded by the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund through its Advancing Circular Economy Facility. It presents a comprehensive four-component framework to transform how Jamaica manages its approximately 1.45 million tonnes of municipal solid waste generated annually.

The position paper was presented at a stakeholder workshop hosted in partnership between ESL and the Caribbean Maritime University and was funded by the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. The workshop convened a diverse cross-section of stakeholders including representatives from government ministries, private sector companies, non-governmental organizations, academia, and scholars from Foundation Preparatory School in Clarendon who in partnership with Plakortis showcased Eco- brick housing concepts, creating a platform for multi-sectoral dialogue on advancing Jamaica’s circular economy transition.

The paper finds that 50–65% of current landfill inputs could be diverted through material recovery, organic waste processing, and extended producer responsibility schemes. This diversion would simultaneously reduce methane emissions, lower marine pollution, create employment, and strengthen Jamaica’s climate resilience ahead of increasingly intense storm seasons.

*“The Ministry believes that land-based sources of pollution must be managed and ultimately eliminated to prevent further damage to the fisheries, tourism, and blue economy. A circular economic framework provides an opportunity for stakeholders to manage and reduce waste efficiently. With proper coordination, the plastic ban already in effect will provide a practical example for the circular economy.”*

**— Dr. Melissa Curtis, Director of Environment Policy Monitoring- Environment and Risk Management, Ministry of Water, Environment and Climate Change**

### A Framework Built for Jamaica’s Realities

The Circular Systems Transformation Framework developed by ESL identifies four interacting components: the dominant material inputs requiring management (plastics, organics, scrap metals, and disaster debris); the enabling infrastructure and policy systems necessary for circularity to function; the circular pathways that prioritise value

retention over disposal; and the measurable environmental and economic outcomes those pathways deliver.

*“One issue that we’re particularly concerned about is nutrient pollution—nitrates and phosphates that get into our marine environment, whether from untreated sewage, industry, or agriculture. Two of our last major fish kills in the Eastern Harbour were directly associated with nutrient loading. This is a significant concern because when we look at reducing environmental degradation, we must address the multiple sources of pollution that impact our coastal ecosystems. From our point of view, it’s critical that we work on integrated solutions that address these interconnected challenges.”*

**— Anthony McKenzie, Deputy CEO – Environmental Management and Sustainability, National Environment and Planning Agency**

## **From Aspiration to Action: Demonstrations Already Underway**

The paper points to real-world examples demonstrating that circular economy practices are not theoretical in Jamaica. Caribbean Broilers’ Hybrid Growth Centre at Hill Run, St. Catherine, processes up to 23,000 tonnes of biological waste annually through an on-site Protein Recovery and Rendering System, converting poultry processing residues into animal feed ingredients while treating and reusing wastewater for irrigation. Furniture manufacturer Woodcats International Ltd transforms construction waste, salvaged pallets, and storm-damaged timber into premium furniture illustrating how design-led circular models can generate economic value from discarded materials.

Recycling Partners of Jamaica (RPJ) and Wisynco Group are also cited as examples of industry actors pioneering collection systems and recycled-content manufacturing respectively, though the paper notes these initiatives remain constrained by the absence of domestic reprocessing capacity and systemic regulatory incentives.

## **Marine Ecosystems and the Blue Economy at Stake**

Over 75% of Caribbean marine pollution originates from land-based sources, and Jamaica’s 24 major river systems transfer pollutants from inland waste sites to coastal waters within 24–48 hours of rainfall events. The paper connects this directly to threats facing Jamaica’s USD 4.3 billion tourism industry and the approximately 45,000 livelihoods dependent on commercial and artisanal fisheries.

*“Over the years we have seen a significant reduction in the waste that ends up on our coastline through projects like the Ocean Cleanup Interceptors and beach cleanups. But these are only band-aid solutions. For us to have a significant reduction in plastic material, we have to change the type of material that is being used. If we don’t change the way we design products and how we use those products, these problems are only going to continue. We must recognize that Jamaica imports quite a bit of the products we consume here. It’s not just about what we manufacture, but what we consume. The mechanisms and frameworks we put in place need to recognize that as well.”*

**— Dr. Theresa Rodriguez-Moodie, Chief Executive Officer, Jamaica Environment Trust**

Natural coastal defence systems including mangroves and seagrass beds, which attenuate wave energy by 50–99% and represent USD 800 million to USD 1.2 billion per year in avoided damage costs, are under pressure from waste-driven degradation. The paper frames circular economy adoption as a low-regret, multi-benefit climate intervention directly relevant to Jamaica’s Nationally Determined Contributions.

## Priority Actions Recommended

ESL calls for a national Circular Economy Coordination Platform led by government agencies responsible for environment, waste, water, and planning; updated material flow assessments for dominant waste streams; the designation of eco-industrial nodes supported by shared utilities; and the piloting of anaerobic digestion and composting systems in tourism zones and agro-industrial areas. *“The circular economy we’re building isn’t just about managing waste better. It’s about creating the Jamaica where our children choose to build their careers, where our fishers and farmers thrive, where our businesses compete on innovation and sustainability, and where our environment regenerates instead of degrades. We have the knowledge. We have the examples. We have the imperative. Now we need the action.”*

— Mrs. Eleanor Jones, OD, CEO and Chairman, Environmental Solutions Limited

The paper also calls on the private sector to develop and commercialise circular innovations, and on financiers to prepare blended finance structures for shared infrastructure investments.

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### About Environmental Solutions Limited

Environmental Solutions Limited (ESL) is a leading Caribbean environmental consultancy with expertise in waste management, environmental impact assessment, and circular economy transition planning. ESL has contributed to landfill rehabilitation, plastic policy implementation, and resource recovery initiatives across Jamaica and the wider region.

### About the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund Advancing Circular Economy Facility

The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund’s Advancing Circular Economy Facility supports initiatives that link land-based waste management reform to marine biodiversity protection and blue economy resilience across the Caribbean region.

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