

TRADING WASTE WITH THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Trade-related challenges
regarding battery recycling



Reinhardt Smit
Co-Founder Closing the Loop

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ABOUT ME

- Co-founder of Closing the Loop
- Lifetime experience in Africa
- 8 years of experience trading waste between Europe and Africa
- South African, raised in Ghana

ABOUT CLOSING THE LOOP

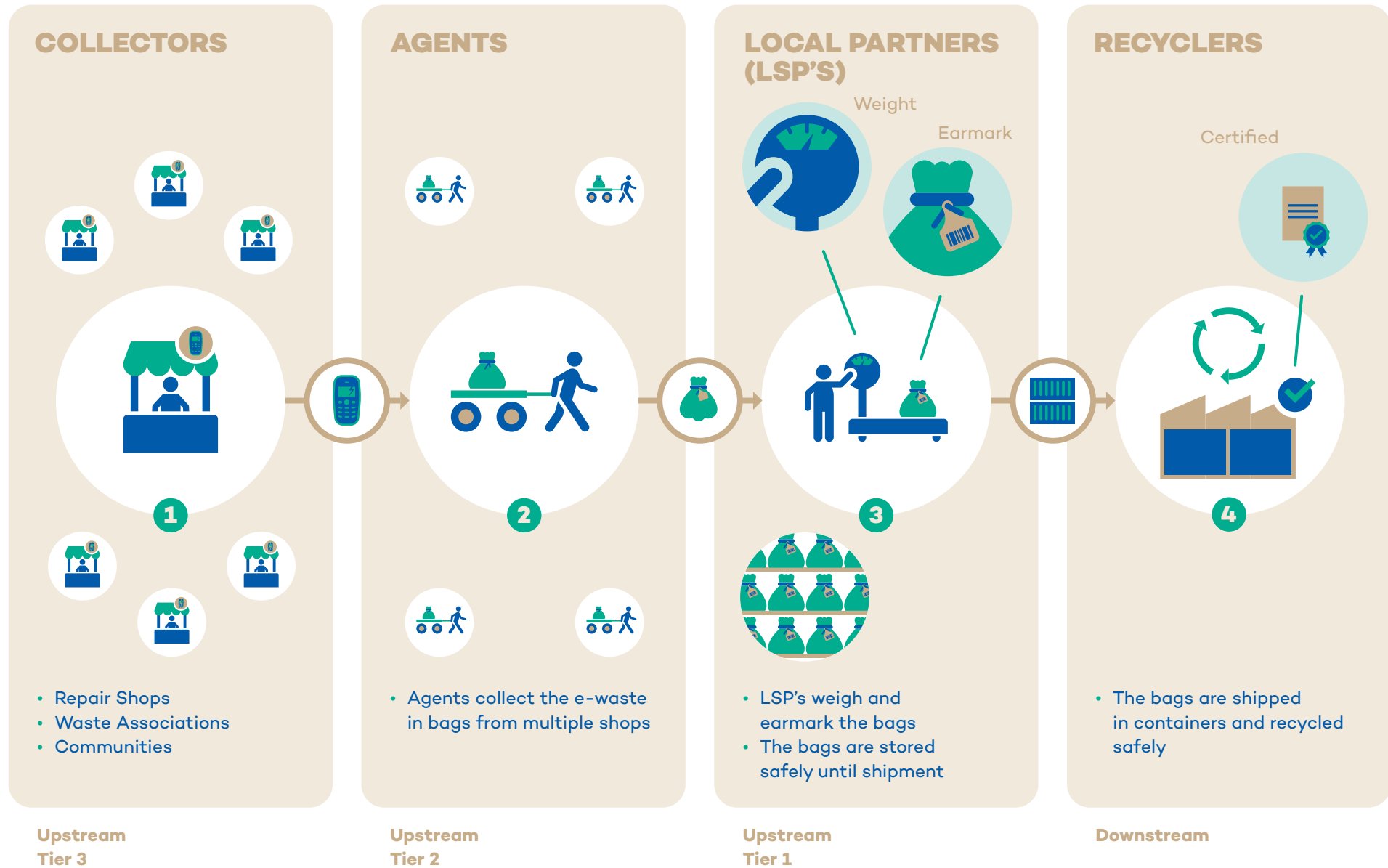
- Social Enterprise based in the Netherlands, global customer base
- Offers Waste Compensation, a commercial service for Circular Economy, enabling collection and recycling of waste ([see here](#))

ABOUT CLOSING THE LOOP

- 12 years experience in Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, South Africa and more)
- Collected >4 million mobile phones
- Collected ± 1 million batteries
- We operate mainly in Africa
- Exported waste from 6 different African countries
- We work with local collection networks & partners

SUPPLY CHAIN

How does it work?



IMPORTANT CONTEXT

- Our experience is with the **export** of waste from Africa. For this discussion, we are not talking about the import of waste. The issue of 'illegal dumping' is not in scope for this presentation. I advise to separate the topics.
- Our experience is with **mobile phone/laptop batteries**, not car batteries (IC cars). This is an important distinction:
 - Car batteries can be recycled at a profit from material value, even if done correctly.
 - Mobile phone/laptop batteries can not be recycled correctly purely based on material value.
- There is much to be said on waste transport, this presentation tries to focus on **trade**

COMPLEX REALITY OF WASTE TRANSPORTATION

- Basel Convention covers waste transportation. Implemented to avoid dumping of waste.
- Waste transport historically (and presently) not presented as a trade issue
- Basel Convention is very strict (with good reason)
- Usually managed by Environmental Ministries & Agencies

CHALLENGES

- Because of complex permitting, very few “honest” actors
- Low volume of permits means less capacity in developing countries
- Waste shipment permits are an Environmental issue, waste trade is an economic one
 - Consequences for customs, different ministries, etc.
 - Consequences in understanding the operational issues & the business issues
- Waste has bad reputation with carriers & freight forwarders
- Some waste is actually ‘hazardous’
- Informal nature of collection can complicate matters

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Collaboration is key! Authorities working together can help overcome challenges.
- Approaching waste as a commodity to be traded
- Capacity building involving the right actors, especially operationally

THANK YOU



Reinhardt Smit

reinhardt.smit@closingtheloop.eu

