Managing the waste after the cleanup can be a big and tricky task. Here we have few basic guidelines to help you plan the process. Even if you are not able to follow all of them, even following one or two of them is a good start!

If you have questions or need more information, feel free to contact the knowledge team at info@letsdoitworld.org

**Guiding principles for post-cleanup waste management**

**Waste in one place is better than waste in thousands of places**

Getting as much waste as possible into one place is already a step in the right direction, even if the possibilities to manage it properly are poor. It will:

- remove litter from landscapes, make it visible in one managed site, and remove related health and environmental risks from the environment;
- make it easier to manage and control the collected materials;
- help to better organise the following steps.

Do not leave the waste after collecting it! Put constant pressure on your local governments to take care of it properly!

**Connect with the informal sector (if there is one)**

These can be waste pickers, cartoneros, etc. They are people who:

- may have the local “informal” knowledge on:
  - which materials may be of value,
  - how to connect with markets for the waste materials,
  - where trash points are most frequently found, etc.

**We aim to minimise leakage of resources from circular models**

This means separate and recycle what you can, so we can at least extend the life of these materials a bit.

See what makes sense to be sorted:

- Reusable and/or sellable and/or recyclable materials (depending on the place: metal, some plastics (bottles and containers, foil), wood, glass, stones, textiles, construction and demolition, others...);
- Biodegradable (can be composted):
  - if you manage to collect clean organic material (free of plastic, metal, glass, chemicals) build a compost heap. Basic instructions will be given in a separate document. You can use this compost anywhere;
  - if organic waste is mixed with other waste it will also degrade. Mixed waste compost, however, is not suitable for food production. This type of composting is called “stabilisation” and it is still better than burying waste into a landfill (see also point about stabilisation). Basic guidance will be provided in a separate document.
- Hazardous waste (e.g. electronics, chemicals, medical waste) - it’s best to have skilled people to handle them (most important: mark the site as “hazardous” and report the items). If not, find a place to keep it separately.
- Everything else, materials that can’t be used - aim should be to get this pile as small as possible - to landfill, temporary dumping site or any other existing local disposal sites.

Make sure they don’t feel as if you are taking away their job, but rather offering them help to collect the waste. If they are willing to sell or do something with the waste, give it to them for free instead of trying to sell it yourself; don’t become their competitor. If you are already in the recycling business yourself, find a way to cooperate with them.
Set-up one (or more) resource station(s) to be supervised by one or more resource managers

A resource station is a place where all the collected waste can be stored temporarily, for sorting and/or keeping it safe from being carried away by wind, water or something else (e.g. wildlife), before transporting it to be recycled or landfilled.

Always consider:

- whether you need to get permits or permission to have the waste on the spot you have chosen (and to transport the waste);
- who is the jurisdictional authority or owner of the site (some possibilities: municipality, district, county, region, state, private owner).

- It may be done at already existing facilities, e.g. a landfill site or a municipal recycling center. It would be the best!
- If landfill is far away, make your own local temporary transfer (resource) station, so that over time, the waste can be taken to a controlled landfill site - e.g. 10x10m (not too big, but can depend a lot on local conditions; remember to consider also the room required for trucks to move around the waste heaps).
- In the case of temporary resource/transfer stations, try to consider all that is needed to prevent it from becoming an uncontrolled dumping site: areas with restricted or controlled access are preferable.

- Avoid any and all fires! Burning of mixed waste is the worst scenario.

- Logistics/Transport: you may be considering renting a cargo ship (islands) and even plan to manage separation for recycling on board.

Choice of possible temporary resource station - what should be the basic requirements?

- Distance from water bodies, protection against tides, transit runoff water, leaching.
- Always consider possible protection and sheltering from wind drift, if relevant.

- Consider siting collected trash far from installations that may spark fires (high voltage electricity lines, furnaces, and the like). No open fires!
- Appoint someone to manage/supervise/coordinate the site.
- Try to work with local jurisdictional authorities - municipalities, districts, counties, whoever has the role and responsibility - who may help you make things happen.

Always consider basic activities at the site to minimize environmental impact (water, air pollution, etc). Covering with soil may help to prevent pests and avoid wind drift.

What if there is no landfill for final destination for waste which is not recovered?

You may need to create a local disposal site. For more info on how to create a local disposal site, you can read the guide done by WasteAid.

Stabilisation of residuals to help to minimise impacts of landfilling

About 2/3 of landfill waste contains organic matter. As organic material biodegrades in oxygen-free conditions, it releases landfill gas – a mixture of methane and carbon dioxide. Landfill gas is greenhouse gas and should be minimised.

Stabilisation of mixed waste refers to technology where organic material is decomposed in an oxygen-rich environment. Methane is not generated; therefore, it is better than burying waste into a landfill. The process is similar to composting, but mixed waste compost contains pollutants and is not suitable for food production.

There are wide-ranging possible approaches, including low-tech (e.g. simple passively aerated windrows). A separate document focusing on these options will be provided.

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