

**ISWA
2026**



**CREATE
LEGACY**

**LDN | UK
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**Event Legacy Objectives
and Programme Themes**

ISWA World Congress 2026 Event Legacy Objectives and Programme Themes

Event Title

Create Legacy:

**2 Billion Tonnes Every Year and Rising*
Waste or Resources? Opportunities to protect
and enhance health, environments and economies.**

The legacy CIWM aims to create at ISWA World Congress 2026 is:

- ▶ To **showcase world-class resources and waste management** strategies, policies, regulatory frameworks and legislation, services, infrastructure and facilities from the UK, Europe and across the world – to inspire and establish best practice for delegates to learn from and adapt for their own professional context.
- ▶ To emphasise, to key stakeholders & new audiences, the vital importance of and opportunities to **protect and enhance health, environments** and economies via the deployment of effective and efficient resource and waste management systems, skills and services.
- ▶ To **emphasise the risks, to health, environments and economies, of poor waste disposal practices** and of lack of progress to progressive waste management and circular economy principles.

(Municipal solid waste generation is predicted to grow from 2.1 billion tonnes in 2023 to 3.8 billion tonnes by 2050. In 2020, the global direct cost of waste management was an estimated USD 252 billion. When factoring in the hidden costs of pollution, poor health and climate change from poor waste disposal practices, the cost rises to USD 361 billion. **With out urgent action on waste management, by 2050 this global annual cost could almost double to a staggering USD 640.3 billion – UNEP 2024)**

- ▶ To **broaden understanding of circular economy principles** and of resource efficiency and resilience, and the economic, environmental and social benefits thereof, using best-practice at-scale examples from around the world.
- ▶ To further **strengthen international resources and waste management and circular economy communities** and networks.

.....and to **help to move the world beyond waste.**

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Programme Themes

The programme themes provide the subjects for technical programme content.

Primary themes originate from ISWA's Principles & Guidance for Lasting Change – supporting the global transition to effective and sustainable waste management and a circular economy. Secondary themes (the bullet points under each primary theme) are intended to be the themes used for the development of the technical programme and under which delegates will be invited to submit abstracts/papers.

Theme 01: Human Rights

Every individual should be free from any harmful effects of waste

- Health, safety and well-being
- Pollution abatement and remediation
- Hazardous and healthcare waste management
- Enable provision of baseline core controlled waste services in underserved communities (collections for all and end to open burning and dumping)
- Climate change impacts and a 'just transition' to net zero
- Black carbon, greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution

Theme 02: Political Commitment

Ensuring continuous improvement in waste management service provision and recognising its societal importance

- Waste, resources and circular economy treaties, strategies, frameworks and roadmaps
- Governance and legal issues
- Build political commitment for universal access to waste services
- Effective regulation and enforcement – local, national and international
- Consider equality, diversity, and inclusion for the waste sector and service provision
- Waste and environmental education
- Effective communications, engagement and behavioural change – waste prevention, recycling and best practice
- Cooperation and collaboration – international, regional and cross-sectoral

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Theme 03: Waste Planning

Designing and delivering viable solutions for national and local contexts (social, political, economic, legal, and technical factors)

- Systems thinking and planning for resource efficiency and resilience
- Practical pathways for improving waste and resource systems in lower income places, rapidly growing cities and advanced economies
- Infrastructure and treatment technologies
- Collections, transport and logistics innovations
- Street cleansing - innovations and high-standards enabling thriving local economies
- Tackling waste crime – illegal and uncontrolled dumping
- Construction, demolition and soils remediation
- Physical recycling technologies and best practice
- Bio/organics recycling technologies and best practice
- Chemical and molecular recycling technologies and best practice
- Emerging waste streams (composite materials and renewable energy materials)
- Challenging material streams – including plastics, e-waste, textiles and hygiene products
- Skills, training and standards
- Integrating informal and community-based recycling and waste services
- Information, data flows and deploying AI for better waste and resource management
- Energy from Waste technologies and best practice – including heat networks, carbon capture, utilisation and storage

Theme 04: The economics of waste and resource management

Essential investment to realise wider socio-economic benefits

- Financing waste services and infrastructure
- Best practice in procurement and contracts
- Extended Producer Responsibility and other funding mechanisms
- Market development and scalability – for secondary materials and essential services
- Affordability and knowledge sharing
- Social value and ESG reporting
- Climate finance, carbon pricing, and sector contribution to net zero
- Learning from and valuing nature-based solutions

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Theme 05: Circular Economy (CE)

Prioritising a transition to more circular economies by 2050

- New business and service models and products for a circular economy – including best practice, at-scale, and industry case studies
- Better design – designing out waste and enabling recyclability
- Skills, training and standards
- Circular Economy principles and awareness – links to climate, pollution and nature emergencies
- Waste prevention, reuse, repair and servitisation, etc. – metrics, targets and best practice