

3R Ecopoint Network collects 35% of the plastic waste in Vilanculos

The project supported by IUCN, is creating significant social and environmental impact in Mozambique



Ecopoint manager weighs the material at the city center Ecopoint surrounded by bags of plastic

Vilanculos is a small paradise, located in central Mozambique, in front of Bazaruto Archipelago - Mozambique's first declared marine protected area. The beautiful beaches and the rich wildlife at the Indian Ocean coast have, however, been suffering with marine litter. Most of the waste produced in Vilanculos remains not collected or end up in a local dumpsite or the environment. A partnership between IUCN, the company 3R-Reduzir Reusar e Reciclar and the NGO Parceiros Comunitários (ParCo) started to change this scenario and is now making sure that 35% of the plastic waste produced monthly in Vilanculos will have proper treatment.

3R is a Mozambican waste management and recycling company, collecting, sorting, monitoring, processing and sending recyclable material to recyclers in Mozambique and abroad. ParCo is a local NGO based in Vilanculos with a lot of experience with community mobilization in beach cleaning events. Together, they established 2 ecopoints, one at the city center and another at Mangalisse neighbourhood.

Almost 700 people have already taken material to the ecopoints where they received payments for each kilogram delivered. "Now the recyclables have value in Vilanculos. This means that it is not waste anymore, but a resource. As we build the value chain for recyclable materials we generate income for the population that has been suffering a lot with COVID impact in the local tourism industry and we make sure a significant amount of material does not reach the ocean.", says Maíra Valladares, 3R's CEO.



Teresa Navelane, waste picker, that delivers recyclables at the ecopoint

Teresa Navelane started collecting recyclables 3 months ago. With the money she gets from delivering the material, she buys basic food items. “I think this project helped (the local Community). Now we have a fixed place to sell our material and can have some income”, says Teresa.

With 55,000 inhabitants, and a daily production of 0,35 kg of waste per person, Vilanculos produces 19,2 tons of waste per day. According to waste characterization studies, 2,7% of it are plastics. This means 15,5 tons per month. In average the ecopoints have been collecting 5 tons of plastics per month, that represents approximately 35% of the plastic waste in Vilanculos.



3R team at the MRF preparing a PET bale

All the material is taken to 3R’s Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Vilanculos. The space is equipped with scales, vehicles and processing machinery, and run by a local team of 9 people. There, the

recyclables are further screened, weighed, processed, monitored, and sent to recyclers to be transformed in new products.



Group doing Saturday's beach clean in Vilanculos

Besides the Ecopoint Network and the MRF, the project supports weekly beach clean events. Every Saturday, 20-25 community members divided in small groups clean approximately 10 km of coast. Radio spots in Portuguese and the local language Xitsua, also promote awareness raising and environmental education about plastics.

Visit the project page at Impact track and follow its progress:
<https://page.impacttrack.org/3r-ecopoint-network>