**SMART WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FINAL DRAFT**

**PROBLEM STATEMENT :**

Waste management in South Africa faces numerous challenges and the SWMS sets out plans, targets and measures to address them. The main challenges are:

1. A growing population and economy, which means increased volumes of smart waste generated. This puts pressure on waste management facilities, which are already in short supply.
2. Increased complexity of the waste stream because of urbanization and industrialization. The complexity of the waste stream directly affects the complexity of its management, which is compounded when hazardous waste mixes with general waste.
3. A historical backlog of waste services for, especially, urban informal areas, tribal areas and rural formal areas. Although 61%10 of all South African households had access to kerbside domestic waste collection services in 2007, this access remains highly skewed in favour of more affluent and urban communities. Inadequate smart waste services lead to unpleasant living conditions and a polluted, unhealthy environment.
4. Limited understanding of the main waste flows and national waste balance because the submission of waste data is not obligatory, and where data is available, it is often unreliable and contradictory.
5. A policy and regulatory environment that does not actively promote the waste management hierarchy. This has limited the economic potential of the smart waste management sector, which has an estimated turnover of approximately R10 billion per annum11. Both waste collection and the recycling industry make meaningful contributions to job creation and GDP, and they can expand further.
6. Absence of a recycling infrastructure which will enable separation of waste at source and diversion of waste streams to material recovery and buy back facilities.
7. Growing pressure on outdated smart waste management infrastructure, with declining levels of capital investment and maintenance.
8. Waste management suffers from a pervasive under-pricing, which means that the costs of smart waste management are not fully appreciated by consumers and industry, and waste disposal is preferred over other options.
9. Few waste treatment options are available to manage waste and so they are more expensive than landfill costs.
10. Too few adequate, compliant landfills and hazardous smart waste management facilities, which hinders the safe disposal of all waste streams. Although estimates put the number of waste handling facilities at more than 200012, significant numbers of these are unpermitted.

**PROBLEM DESCRIPTION:**

The development of the NWMS is an important milestone in the process of implementing the Waste Act, and in establishing an integrated approach to waste management across government and society more broadly. As stated in Section 1, South Africa faces particular challenges in relation to smart waste management that require a coordinated effort by government and stakeholders. Addressing these challenges will not be easy, given the capacity and resource constraints we face as a developing country with large income inequalities and competing development priorities. Nevertheless, the implementation of the smart waste management hierarchy and achievement of the objectives outlined in this strategy is integral to achieving a sustainable future and a better life for all South Africans.