

## Recycling programme launched in rapidly growing Victoria Falls town

In an effort to protect the environment around Victoria Falls, one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, the town has launched a recycling project, reducing the amount of litter on the streets and the volume of waste going to the dumpsite.



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Victoria Falls Recycling (VFR), an initiative sponsored by Zimbabwean hospitality group Africa Albida Tourism (AAT), and coordinated by local environmental conservationist Charlene Hewat, launched this month.

Hewat said the initiative, which is supported by Greenline Africa Trust, Petreco Zim and Victoria Falls Municipality, had begun operations, initially, recycling paper and plastics from eight hotels.

“Paper and thin plastics will be sent to Harare where they will be recycled to make plastic bags and piping, while thicker plastics, such as water bottles, will be sent to a recycling plant in South Africa,” Hewat said.

“Within a year, the project is expected to expand to include the recycling of glass and beverage cans, as well as taking recyclable goods from the wider Victoria Falls community,” added Hewat.

### **Tourism operators invited to participate as project grows**

As the project develops, it will also include tourism operators in surrounding areas, such as Hwange National Park, who are keen to participate. There are no other recycling plants in the resort town, and this initiative is expected to have a major impact.

“Around 80% of waste is recyclable or compostable, so should not be going to the dumpsite at all. If we can reduce the amount of waste going to the dumpsite, and do it in a manner that creates jobs and also improves the environment, I believe recycling is the key,” Hewat said.

The operation has been set up as a community-based project with locals trained to operate the machines, sort waste, bale, load and manage the project, with the aim of creating a fully sustainable recycling programme in Victoria Falls.

VFR is operating from an AAT-owned site in the industrial area of the resort town, but as the project develops it will relocate to a larger recycling area which has been designated by the Victoria Falls Municipality.

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