Changing the Economics of Resources by Advancing Africa’s Circular Economy

Africa’s economic growth has followed a linear model where natural resources are extracted, products are manufactured and consumed, and waste is discarded. As populations grow, urbanisation accelerates, and consumption rises, this model is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

The circular economy (CE) has gained attention in recent years, offering a different and more viable approach. By keeping products, materials, and resources in use longer through reuse, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing, and recycling, the CE model prioritises efficient resource allocation while decoupling economic growth from resource consumption. These models can reduce waste while creating new sources of economic value.

For Africa, the opportunity extends beyond environmental sustainability. Circularity can support industrialisation, strengthen resource security, create jobs, attract investment and help the continent retain more value from the resources it already possesses.

We explore how circular economy models could create new sources of value across Africa, from turning waste into energy and industrial inputs to developing new businesses, jobs and regional value chains, and the investment and regulatory conditions needed to scale these opportunities.