

King Baudouin Foundation awards Wecyclers N81m to expand in Nigeria

By Fakoyejo Olalekan - March 25, 2019

Lagos-based waste management startup, **Wecyclers**, has won the King Baudouin Foundation's African Development Prize.

Wecyclers was awarded the sum of N81 million (€200,000), which gives them the needed capital support for the expansion of their business.

Why Wecyclers won the Prize: Out of 244 applications received by the foundation, **Wecyclers** was chosen as the most for its role in community development.



The award ceremony will be held on June 12, 2019, in the presence of King Philippe and Queen Mathilde of Belgium at the Royal Palace in Brussels, Belgium.

"WE ARE PROUD TO RECOGNISE WECYCLERS FOR THEIR VERY EFFECTIVE MODEL... THE INDEPENDENT SELECTION COMMITTEE SELECTED THE ENTERPRISE OUT OF 244 APPLICATIONS FOR ITS INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY, TURNING RECYCLING INTO AN ECONOMIC DRIVER FOR

COMMUNITIES AND TURNING CITIZENS INTO AGENTS OF CHANGE.” SAID, HERVÉ LISOIR FROM THE KING BAUDOUIIN FOUNDATION.”

A quick look at opportunities the Award avails Wecyclers

- The African Development Prize will allow Wecyclers to upscale their model and increase their footprint.
- The Prize also provides access to a wide network of stakeholders in Europe and the US, who may support them as they grow

Wecyclers’ portfolio

The company currently has more than 17,000 subscribers in seven localities in Lagos. The Start-up registers around 200 new members each month. **Wecyclers** has also created 200 jobs in 7-years, with a focus on women, who currently account for 60% of their workforce. With current growth projections, **Wecyclers** aim to collect 5,000 tons of recyclables by 2020 and could be serving 500,000 households by 2023.

The company’s growth began under the [leadership of Bilikiss Adebisi-Abiola](#), the co-founder of Wecyclers, who has since been appointed as the Managing Director of the Lagos State Parks and Gardens Agency (LASPARK) in 2018.

The company is based in the State which is likely to become the biggest city in the world by 2100, as Africa is projected to account for 5 out of the 10 biggest cities in the world by 2100. Today, Lagos residents generate 15,000 tons of waste per day, of which only 40% is collected by the Government.

And with the gap left in the collation of waste in Lagos State, the country holds enormous revenue for **Wecyclers**, because the company is designed to help fill this gap and reduce solid waste in the streets of Lagos, improving both the environment and the well-being of populations.

How Wecyclers work: The waste company utilises low and high technology solutions that comprise SMS technology and a mobile application, as well as low-cost collection vehicles, which collect recyclable waste directly from households to sell to recycling plants before being made into new products.

“GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY IS IN THE DNA OF WECYCLERS. WE WANT TO EXPAND OUR BUSINESS TO OTHER NEIGHBOURHOODS. IN THE MIDTERM, WE WANT TO BE BIG ENOUGH TO BUILD OUR OWN RECYCLING PLANT.

“GROWING MORE FOR WECYCLERS, MEANS BEING ABLE TO GIVE BACK EVEN MORE TO THE COMMUNITY,” SAID OLAWALE ADEBIYI, CEO OF WECYCLERS.”

Some notable backers of Wecyclers includes Tony Elumelu Foundation and Unilever, with whom **Wecyclers** recently launched “kiosks” in places where there are no collection routes.