

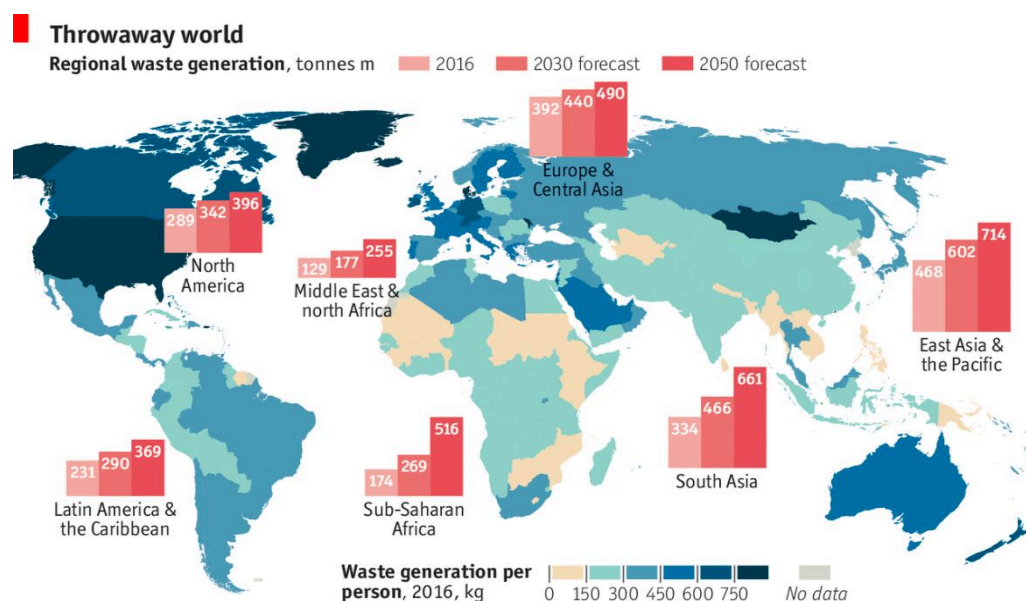
## Green Economy X Global Powers

Anna Vitoria Mauricio

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Consumerism is the constant desire to buy more, more than what you actually need. Thorstein Veblen's theory of "conspicuous consumption" illustrates how consumerism is driven by the desire to project social status and wealth, often at the expense of practicality or necessity. Amplified by marketing strategies and cultural expectations, this behavior fuels a cycle of excessive consumption aimed at gaining societal recognition. In addition to fostering inefficiency and excess, it further intensifies social inequalities.

Consumerism is a global issue, with the most noticeable impacts in countries like the United States and China, where impulsive buying behaviors contribute significantly to pollution. This has led to an urgent need for a green economy, as our current consumption patterns marked by waste and environmental damage are pushing the planet to the brink of irreversible harm. The green economy is the idea of bringing together environmental sustainability with economic growth.



Source: World Bank  
The Economist

([Image 1](#))

Through this image you can visualize the growth of the waste throughout the world! Asia, Africa and Europe are the highest ones.

Amelia Gonzalez argues that 90% of the world's electronic waste is discarded in African countries. ([Article 1](#)).

Asia, Europe, and North America play a significant role in global waste generation due to their high levels of production and consumption. These regions continue to consume extensively without adequately considering alternatives such as reuse or recycling. Regrettably, a substantial portion of this waste is exported to developing nations, particularly in certain African countries, exacerbating environmental and socio-economic challenges in these regions.

The BBC News article highlights Africa as one of the world's largest "electronic graveyards" making it one of the most polluted areas on the planet. Unfortunately, many African countries receive a significant amount of electronic waste from developed nations, resulting in severe environmental and social damage. Experts warn that the toxins from these landfills are slowly poisoning local workers, while also contaminating the soil and atmosphere. This situation further exacerbates the already limited resources in the region, damaging the few natural and social assets Africa has, and deepening economic and environmental inequalities.

The scientist Hywel Jones, from Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom, underscores the need for a collective approach to solving this issue: "We are facing a huge problem, and we are beginning to address it with significant delay. Science and technology will guide us, but this must occur in tandem with the consumer and changes in human behavior." ([Article 2](#))



([Image 2](#))

One of the main causes of the electronic waste problem in Africa is the lack of proper management infrastructure. Many developing countries in Africa struggle with limited resources to establish efficient waste management systems. This means they lack the necessary infrastructure, such as recycling plants or waste treatment centers, to properly handle large amounts of waste.

Another significant cause is economic inequality. Wealthier countries, especially in Europe, North America and Asia can afford to send their waste to poorer nations where disposal costs are considerably lower. In many cases these nations take advantage of the lack of infrastructure and favorable economic conditions in developing countries to offload their waste cheaply.

The rapid pace of technological updates, with new smartphones and electronic devices being released every year, has created a significant problem. Many people are used to keep in the latest features and advancements, even when the older ones are still functional. This cycle of continuous upgrading not only leads to unnecessary waste but also contributes to the growing *e-waste*<sup>1</sup> crisis.

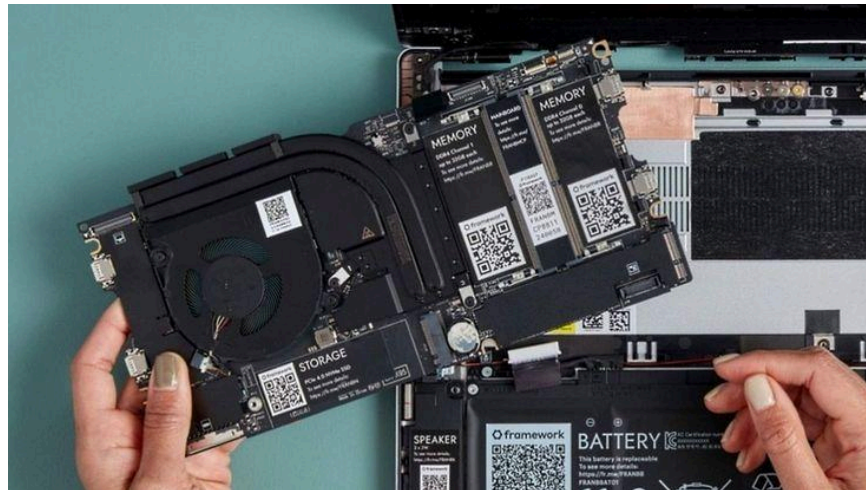
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<sup>1</sup> **E-waste** (electronic waste) refers to discarded electronic devices and equipment that are no longer functional or desired. This includes items like smartphones, computers, televisions, and household appliances.

Discarded electronics, which often contain toxic materials, are frequently exported to developing countries like those in Africa, where proper disposal and recycling systems are lacking. This practice not only wastes valuable resources but also places an unfair burden on these regions, causing serious environmental and health problems. Tackling this issue calls for better waste management systems and a global move toward more sustainable consumption habits.

The green economy represents a powerful solution to addressing the growing issues of waste and pollution, offering a pathway to make the planet healthier while protecting both people and ecosystems. This approach emphasizes sustainable practices, such as better resource management, increased recycling, and minimizing activities that harm the environment. Instead of dumping waste in places that it can't handle, the green economy teaches how to use the resources better, recycling more and avoiding things that pollute. This means creating products that last longer and can be fixed instead of throwing it away all the time. The initiative was developed by UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) in 2008.

Electronic Waste has been ravaging our world today. Addressing this challenge a man called Nirav Patel introduced the idea of “fixing something and not throwing it away”. He created the FrameWork Laptop, so instead of producing a new laptop every year and creating a lot of waste, his invention can replace individual parts like the battery, memory, or storage instead of throwing the whole device away.



(Image 3)

This laptop supports the idea of a circular economy. In a circular economy we keep things in use for as long as possible, conserving resources and minimizing the need for a constant production of new materials. This approach promotes sustainability and encourages more responsible consumption patterns.

The world faces a crisis, driven by major powers like China and the United States. These nations not only consume unsustainably but also often export their waste, including electronic waste in African countries. However, initiatives like FrameWork Laptop, offer a practical and sustainable solution. *Green economy isn't just an idea; it's a necessity.* Prioritizing sustainability, resource conservation and social equity. The green economy offers a pathway between sustainability and economic growth.

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