



FROM WASTE BANK TO COMMUNITY CIRCULAR RESOURCES

A Practical Field Guide to Starting
and Running a Community Waste Bank

Real experience. Simple system.
Big impact for people and the planet.

"Waste has value.
Together we build
a cleaner, stronger
community."

— Abadi Purwadaksina
Director, BSU Mandiri



FIELD RESULTS BY 2025



12 TONS

Total Waste
Managed



IDR 12.5 MILLION

Member
Savings



**120 ACTIVE
HOUSEHOLDS**

Participating
Households



**3
SCHOOL
PARTNERS**

Environmental Education
Partners



BEST WASTE BANK

Award from the Mayor
of Sukabumi
HPSN 2025 • 2026

Recognized by the Mayor of Sukabumi, awarded as Best Waste Bank at National Waste Awareness Day (HPSN) 2025, and another Best Waste Bank recognition at the City Environmental Agency Forum in 2026.



BSU MANDIRI
Sampahmu, Tabunganmu!



Sukabumi,
West Java, Indonesia



Based on Real Experience
Nearly 2 Years on the Ground

ABOUT THIS EDITION

From Waste Bank to Community Circular Resources

This English edition is translated and redesigned from the original Indonesian e-book ***Panduan Mendirikan Bank Sampah dari Nol***. The underlying practices, examples, figures, and lessons remain those documented by BSU Mandiri. The visual layout has been reworked for an international English-speaking audience.

Important: The book is a field guide, not a universal legal or technical standard. The original author explicitly advises readers to adapt the approach to local conditions, culture, and regulations.

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Sukabumi, West Java, Indonesia • Digital publication

THE FIELD RESULT

What BSU Mandiri had achieved by 2025

12 Tons	IDR 12.5 Million	120 Active Households	3
total waste managed	member savings	participating households	school partners

The original edition also records recognition from the Mayor of Sukabumi, the Best Waste Bank award at National Waste Awareness Day (HPSN) 2025, and another Best Waste Bank recognition at the City Environmental Agency Forum in 2026.



Community-collected recyclable materials ready to move into the recycling chain.

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FOREWORD

A bank can begin with almost nothing

If someone says starting a wastebank requires large capital, a spacious warehouse, and a collection vehicle, I am proof that this is not entirely true.

Our waste bank was built almost from zero. We had no dedicated warehouse, no three-wheeled waste motorcycle, and initially no operating budget. What we had was the willingness of a few people, a garage that someone was willing to lend, and the trust of residents.

Nearly two years in, we had served 120 active household members out of more than 500 households in our RW, managed 12 tons of waste, accumulated member savings of Rp 12,568,759, partnered with three schools for environmental education, and received recognition as one of the city's best waste banks.

I am not an environmental expert. I started by enjoying documenting neighborhood activities with a camera. That simple habit eventually led me into the waste bank movement.

This book is not written to lecture. It is a field record: the frustrations, mistakes, small solutions, and practices that actually worked for us.

Abadi Purwadaksina

Director, BSU Mandiri

From Camera to Scale: How the Story Began



A weighing session at community level.

How I got involved without planning it

The story did not begin with a dramatic decision to save the environment. I simply liked documenting neighborhood activities. When the new waste bank held its first weighing sessions, I came as a volunteer videographer.

After two or three weighing sessions, one of the initiators — a neighbor who was also active in the RW management — invited me to get directly involved. I joined the management team. As the activity grew, the trust of the other organizers pushed me into a larger role, and I eventually became Director of BSU Mandiri.

Lesson: Sometimes meaningful work begins not with a plan, but with showing up. Consistent presence can be more valuable than a title.

The starting condition

Our RW was a residential area with more than 500 households across 10 RTs. When we started, very few residents separated waste. Organic and inorganic waste were commonly mixed. The waste bank's role was to change that behavior gradually.

WHAT IS REALLY NEEDED TO START

Three essentials

1. People willing to move	Atleast 3–5 consistent organizers. Not necessarily the smartest or wealthiest — the people willing to do the work.
2. Residents' trust	Trust grows slowly: one member's story, one WhatsApp video, one meaningful savings withdrawal.
3. A simple, consistent system	Clear records, reliable schedules, and straightforward communication.

The original guide emphasizes that the model is based on nearly two years of direct field experience, rather than textbook theory.

Who is this book for? RT/RW organizers; households or community members initiating environmental activities; students and activists; people starting with limited capital and facilities; and existing waste-bank managers who want to improve operations.

Waste Bank Basics You Need to Understand

Waste bank vs. scrap collector

A scrap collector buys waste and usually pays cash immediately. A waste bank uses a savings model: the value of a resident's recyclable waste is converted into a recorded account balance that can be withdrawn later. Transactions are recorded and the management system is intended to be transparent.

This savings model helps build habits. Residents who previously did not bother separating waste may become more motivated because their account continues to grow.

Common materials accepted

Category	Examples	Indicative value
Paper & cardboard	Cardboard, newspapers, books, office paper	Medium
Plastic	PET bottles, plastic cups, rigid plastic	Low–Medium
Metal	Cans, iron, aluminium	High
Glass	Glass bottles, broken glass	Low
Electronics	Used phones, cables, batteries	Depends on condition
Foam / rubber	Used sandals, shoes	Low
Used cooking oil	Waste cooking oil	Medium; special buyer

SETTING A PURCHASE PRICE

Protect the margin without losing members

The guide recommends setting the purchase price paid to members slightly below the price received from the offtaker, leaving a margin for operations. It warns against making the gap too large, because residents may simply sell to mobile collectors.

Practical rule from the field: ask local offtakers for their current price and consider buying from members at around 85–95% of that price. Update the price list regularly because commodity prices change.

Operating without a permanent warehouse



Temporary storage and collection can be improvised at the beginning.

At BSU Mandiri, a management member's garage served as temporary storage. The key was not letting waste remain there for long — ideally the next day the offtaker collected it. Large or heavy items could temporarily stay at the member's home until collection.

The original book also records that requests for a permanent warehouse and a three-wheeled waste vehicle had been submitted to the city government, but had not yet been realized when the book was written.

CHAPTER 03

How to Start: Step by Step

A very small starting budget

Item	Range	Purpose
Digital scale	Rp 50,000–300,000	One unit is enough to start
Banner	Rp 50,000–150,000	Identity and outreach
Stationery	Rp 30,000–50,000	Manual records
Estimated total	Rp 130,000–500,000	Low-cost starting point

Simple organizational structure

- **Director / Chair:** operational responsibility and decision-making.
- **General Coordinator:** external relations and coordination.
- **Treasurer:** financial records and member balances.
- **Field Team:** weighing and recording support.

LEGALITY AND LOGISTICS

Start simple, then strengthen the system

For a community-level waste bank, the original book describes starting with an official formation letter from the local urban-village office (kelurahan). The book also references Indonesia's Minister of Environment and Forestry Regulation No. 14 of 2021 as a governance reference.

Practical sequence: submit a written request to the lurah, attach the management structure and activity plan, then build the operational system around the legal recognition.

Creative solutions when there is no warehouse or vehicle



A community vehicle can bridge the logistics gap during the early stage.

- Use an organizer's garage for short-term storage.
- Use organizers' personal vehicles for small transport.
- Borrow a neighbor's pickup and reimburse fuel when necessary.

- Ask the offtaker to collect directly.
- Treat these as transitional solutions and continue pursuing a more sustainable logistics arrangement.

Running the Operation Well

A realistic weighing schedule

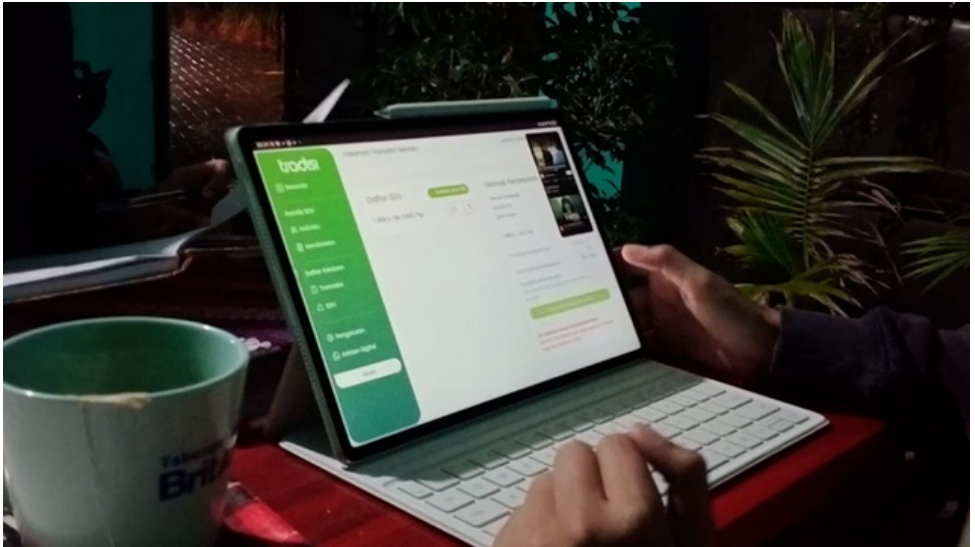
BSU Mandiri initially weighed once a month, usually on Saturday or Sunday, sometimes twice a month. The organizers had other main occupations — civil servants, teachers, entrepreneurs, homemakers, and students — so the available team members moved when weekday weighing was needed.

The RW had 10 RTs. At first, one day could cover all 10 RTs. As membership grew, two days a month were sometimes needed. The book makes an important operational observation: a fixed collection point is more efficient, but door-to-door/RT-level service helped increase participation, especially for elderly members and residents carrying large quantities.

Standard weighing workflow

1	Prepare the location	Scale, notebook and phone ready; team gathers.
2	Receive members	Ideally waste is already separated; mixed waste is separated on site.
3	Weigh by category	Paper, plastic and metal are weighed separately.
4	Write it down first	Manual record speeds up the queue and provides a backup.
5	Enter into the app	Weight and category are entered; balance updates.
6	Confirm the member	Tell the member the new balance.
7	Move the material	Store temporarily and coordinate offtaker pickup for the next day.

Aplikasi Tradisi and the backup principle



Aplikasi Tradisi was used for member and transaction records.

BSU Mandiri received free access to Aplikasi Tradisi from the Sukabumi City Environmental Agency. The book describes an admin dashboard for member data, total balances, waste managed and active members; transaction recording; and independent member access to balances and history.

The member's username and password are sent directly to the member's phone, and organizers do not know the member's password. The book presents this as a trust and data-security feature.

If a similar local system is not available: the original guide recommends asking the local environmental agency first. Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel are sufficient to start.

Operational safeguards

- Do not leave waste in the garage for more than two days.
- Separate material categories even when members bring mixed waste.
- Keep a manual backup or monthly screenshots of digital records.
- Update the purchase-price list before each weighing session.
- Confirm transactions with members.
- Regularly export or summarize member balances outside the application.

Recruiting and Retaining Active Members

In almost two years, BSU Mandiri reached 120 active household out of more than 500 households in the RW without a dedicated promotion budget.

What actually worked

- **Use RT and RW WhatsApp groups.** Share accepted materials, how to join, the contact number and schedules.
- **Use trusted community figures.** A message or video from an RT/RW leader can be more persuasive than a brochure.
- **Tell real member stories.** Stories about electricity tokens, school books or Eid needs make the value tangible.
- **Use the energy of weighing day.** Crowds create curiosity and bring in new members.
- **Involve women organizers.** The book identifies their neighborhood communication networks as especially powerful.

WHEN PEOPLE ARE SHY — AND WHEN THEY STOP COMING

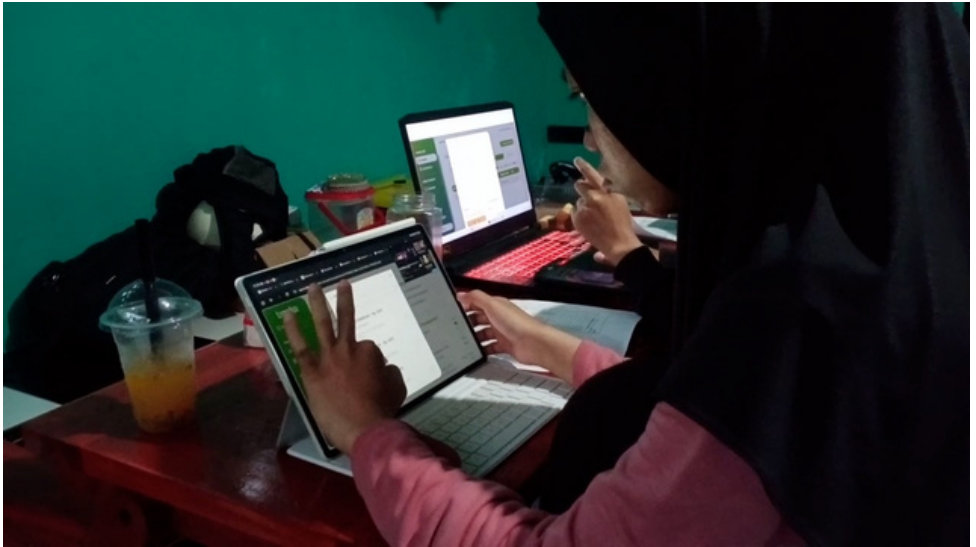
Behavior changes through normalization

At the beginning, some residents felt embarrassed about handling waste because it did not fit their image of a comfortable residential lifestyle. BSU Mandiri addressed this through normalization: as weighing sessions became busy and more neighbors joined, the stigma gradually disappeared.

Problem	Response used by BSU Mandiri
Mobile collectors arrive first	Increase frequency or actively ask members to hold their recyclables.
The value feels too small	Reinforce the savings concept; small balances accumulate.
Members are not used to sorting	Accept mixed waste initially and sort together at the weighing point.
Schedule does not reach their RT	Make the schedule transparent and announce it well in advance.

The book's most memorable examples are deliberately ordinary: a mother using Rp 35,000 of savings to buy an electricity token, a member withdrawing savings before Eid, a parent buying school books, and a member discovering a Rp 500,000 balance after saving for a year.

Free Digital Tools We Use



Digital records make the savings model visible to members.

Aplikasi Tradisi

The guide presents Tradisi as the digital platform used by BSU Mandiri to record transactions, view balances, and monitor operational statistics. The original book gives the Tradisi admin WhatsApp contact as +62-878-9792-2022 and notes that official legal status is one of the requirements for access.

WhatsApp as the operational backbone

- **Internal organizer group:** schedules, task all location and daily operational discussion.
- **Member group:** weighing schedules, price updates and education content.
- **Public contact:** prospects can contact the bank, send identification and begin registration.
- **RT/RW groups:** schedules, sorting tips and member stories.

DOCUMENTATION FOR PROMOTION

Turn operations into visible proof

- Photograph weighing moments and share them in RT/RW WhatsApp groups.
- Ask members for permission before sharing their stories or withdrawal photos.
- Use short 15–30 second videos on WhatsApp Status.
- Track monthly statistics such as active households and kilograms collected.



Sorting activity provides both operational evidence and communication material.

For a community initiative, documentation is not decoration. It helps residents see that the system is real, active and accountable.

The Honest Chapter: Real Challenges and Frustrations

This chapter is unusual for a guide book because it refuses to hide the hard parts. The author argues that pretending the work is easy can make people quit when reality arrives.

No permanent warehouse. No permanent vehicle.

Almost two years in, BSU Mandiri still did not have a permanent warehouse or dedicated collection vehicle when the book was written. Garages rotated as temporary storage spaces. Vehicles were exposed to heat and rain. Families sometimes complained. Neighbors sometimes commented.

The point is not to complain. It is to prepare new organizers. Family members need to understand the commitment before the work begins.

Volunteer fatigue

There were no fixed salaries or honoraria. Organizers weighed, recorded and transported materials. The book identifies fatigue as a hidden enemy of long-term social work and recommends fair task distribution, rotation and occasional shared meals after weighing sessions.

HOW WE KEPT GOING

Small outcomes are often the reason



Moving recovered materials is part of the work — and part of the learning.

Government support was still limited, but the book encourages organizers not to stop submitting requests and to build relationships with the local environmental agency. For BSU Mandiri, persistence eventually produced recognition from the city.

What kept the team going was rarely something grand: a mother paying an electricity token with savings, a new member joining after seeing a busy weighing session, or a resident who had finally made sorting a routine.

For those who want to start: frustration is normal. What is dangerous is quitting before the impact has had time to appear. The book compares the journey to a marathon, not a sprint.

CONCLUSION

A waste bank is really about people

A waste bank is not ultimately about waste. It is about togetherness, trust and sustained behavior change. Waste is only the medium. What actually grows is the community.

Start small. Do not wait for perfect conditions. One scale, one garage and three people who show up consistently can be enough to begin.

The BSU Mandiri experience is a reminder that community systems are built through repetition: weigh, record, communicate, collect, sell, report, and return again next month.

BONUS

Starting a Waste Bank: Checklist

Initial preparation

- Recruit at least 3–5 organizers who can stay consistent.
- Choose one coordinator or director.
- Prepare a digital scale.
- Create a banner or clear waste-bank identity.
- Obtain the local kelurahan formation letter.

Before the first operation

- Find and contact an offtaker or scrap buyer.
- Agree on schedule and prices.
- Create a purchase-price list for members.
- Prepare a record system (Tradisi or spreadsheet).
- Choose the first weighing location.

Member recruitment

- Share information in RT/RW WhatsApp groups.
- Provide an active contact number.
- Ask RT/RW leaders to give visible support.
- Keep registration simple.

Sustained operations

- Set a regular weighing schedule and stick to it.
- Update waste prices every month.
- Back up member balances regularly.
- Document every activity for communication.
- Review what works and what needs improvement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Abadi Purwadaksina

Director, Bank Sampah Unit (BSU) Mandiri



Sukabumi, West Java, Indonesia

Abadi Purwadaksina did not begin as a lifelong environmental activist. His path started with a simple hobby: documenting neighborhood life with a camera. From volunteer videographer to waste-bank director, his story demonstrates how meaningful change can begin with consistent presence.

Before focusing on the waste bank, he had been active in nature and environmental activities since university as a member of Mapala. That concern for nature eventually found a practical home in community waste management.

Under his leadership, BSU Mandiri in Perumahan Taman Asri, Sukabumi, grew from zero to 120 active household members, managed 12 tons of waste and accumulated around Rp 12.5 million in member savings, while operating without a formal warehouse or dedicated vehicle at the time described in the original book.

The original edition records two consecutive Best Waste Bank recognitions from the city, as well as an appreciation certificate from the Mayor of Sukabumi.

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Social Media

Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/@BankSampahMandiri>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/banksampahmandirisukabumi/>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/banksampahunitmandiri/>

Tiktok <https://www.tiktok.com/@banksampahunitmandiri>

X <https://x.com/BSUMandiri>

Website <https://www.bsumandiri.or.id>

Voices from the waste-bank movement

“This e-book is not only a guide but a journey and struggle — the ups and downs of a community-managed waste bank built with enthusiasm and concern for a problem faced across cities and regencies in West Java and Indonesia. May it inspire more communities to manage waste from the source.”

Yusi Yulistiawati

Director, Bank Sammi (Bank Sampah Induk Kota Sukabumi)

“A waste bank is a space for volunteering and becoming more aware of waste. The ‘bank’ concept is a creative approach and gives residents motivation to sort.”

Hadohoan

Initiator & Founder, FORPASI

Thank you for reading.

May your waste bank soon become a real source of benefit for both the environment and the people around you.

Abadi Purwadaksina

BSU Mandiri

LESS WASTE. MORE POSSIBILITIES.

From a small community weighing point to a stronger circular resource system.



BSU MANDIRI

People • Community • Circular Resources

UNDERSTANDING THE INDONESIAN COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Local terms used throughout this field guide. The Indonesian terms are kept where they carry a specific local meaning.

COMMUNITY & LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

KK

Kartu Keluarga

Indonesia's official family registration document. In this book, "KK" is also used as a practical reference for a participating household.

KTP

Kartu Tanda Penduduk

Indonesia's national identity card. The original guide uses a KTP as part of the simple registration process.

RT

Rukun Tetangga

A small neighborhood-level community unit. BSU Mandiri's weighing schedule is organized at RT level.

RW

Rukun Warga

A larger neighborhood community unit made up of several RTs. BSU Mandiri's RW contains 10 RTs.

Kelurahan

An urban administrative area within Indonesia. The guide refers to support and documentation from the local kelurahan.

WASTE BANK & OPERATING TERMS

Nasabah

A registered waste-bank member. Members deposit recyclable materials and receive a recorded savings balance that can later be withdrawn.

Pengepul

A local scrap collector or trader who buys recyclable materials. Mobile collectors can sometimes reach households before the bank's weighing schedule.

Offtaker

The downstream buyer that purchases recyclable materials from the waste bank and moves them into the recycling or scrap supply chain.

Dinas Lingkungan Hidup (DLH)

The local government Environmental Agency. The guide refers to the City Environmental Agency in relation to support, recognition and Tradisi.

Tradisi

The digital platform used by BSU Mandiri to record transactions, view member balances and monitor operational statistics.

EVERYDAY & CULTURAL REFERENCES

Some references in the book are ordinary parts of daily life in Indonesia. These notes help international readers understand why they appear in the stories.

WAG

Short for WhatsApp Group. Neighborhood WAGs are an important communication channel for schedules, announcements, education and recruitment.

HPSN

Hari Peduli Sampah Nasional

Indonesia's National Waste Awareness Day, observed on February 21. BSU Mandiri received a Best Waste Bank recognition associated with HPSN 2025.

ASN

Aparatur Sipil Negara

Indonesian civil servants. The guide mentions ASN among the different professional backgrounds of community organizers.

Madrasah

An Indonesian educational institution with an Islamic educational component. The guide mentions teachers from madrasah among the organizers' backgrounds.

Mapala

Mahasiswa Pecinta Alam

University-based student outdoor and nature-activity organizations. The author's background includes participation in Mapala activities.

Token listrik

Prepaid electricity credit used in Indonesia. The guide gives an example of a member using waste-bank savings to buy an electricity token.

Lebaran / Eid al-Fitr

The major Muslim celebration marking the end of Ramadan. The guide mentions members withdrawing savings before or around Lebaran for household needs.

Rp

The abbreviation for Indonesian rupiah (IDR), Indonesia's national currency.

WHY KEEP THE INDONESIAN TERMS?

These words are not translation mistakes. They describe the real social and administrative setting in which BSU Mandiri operates. Keeping the original terms preserves the local context; these notes simply make that context accessible to readers outside Indonesia.