CLIMATILE™

roofing & cladding

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Strengthening Kenya's Green Building Regulations and Circular Construction Framework

Insights from Takazuri's Experience with Climatile™ Building the Future Locally

Policy Brief

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Executive Summary

Kenya has built strong foundations for sustainable construction through progressive regulations like the Kenya Building Code 2024 and the Climate Change (Green & Resilient Buildings) Regulations 2023. Yet, while the policy framework is ambitious, implementation remains uneven.

At Takazuri, through the development of Climatile™ — a recycled-plastic, solar-integrated roofing and cladding system — we have seen how regulatory ambition meets market reality. Our work, conducted during the recent P4G grant period (2024-2025), involved close collaboration with the Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK), Kenya Green Building Society (KGBS), Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), Kenya Extended Producer Responsibility Organization (KEPRO), and international partners like Danish Industry (DI) through the Loop Trade Show.

Across these engagements, one insight stood out: Kenya's construction sector is ready for innovation — but its systems of verification, financing, and perception must evolve alongside incentives to let innovation scale.

Key recommendations:

1. Operationalize the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) / Kenya Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme (KEPS) for construction materials, and fund local testing innovation.
2. Enforce sustainability indicators within the Building Code 2024 and Climate Regulations 2023.
3. Strengthen KEBS testing and recognition for recycled composites.
4. Harmonize the Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies (EDGE) and Safari Green Building Index (SGBI) certification systems under one national Green Code.
5. Expand green finance to cover certified materials and solar-integrated products.
6. Establish a Green Fundi Program for skilled-labour certification and installer training.

1. Kenya's Policy Landscape — Promise and Pressure

Kenya's new regulatory framework signals a clear national direction toward green and resilient buildings:

- Building Code 2024 (Legal Notice No. 47): mandates energy efficiency, solar integration, and resource-efficient systems; introduces compliance penalties.
- Climate Change (Green & Resilient Buildings) Regulations 2023: establishes a national Green Building Program and accredits systems such as EDGE, SGBI, and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).
- Sustainable Waste Management Act 2022 + EPR Regulations 2024: create the Kenya KEPS, linking producers to waste collection and recycling systems.

In our effort to spark material innovation and drive truly sustainable construction in Kenya, we see enormous potential in connecting the EPR system to circular construction—a practical way to close the loop through industrial reuse and turn waste streams into building solutions. Through our collaboration with KEPRO, KEBS, AAK, and other members of the manufacturing ecosystem, we have seen firsthand how Kenya's existing EPR framework could evolve from a waste-management mechanism into a catalyst for circular construction innovation, linking collected plastics to durable, high-value applications such as Climatile™.

Currently, EPR obligations apply mainly to packaging producers. They fund collection, sorting, and recycling through schemes like KEPS, which have mobilized significant volumes of post-consumer plastics. However, most of this material ends up in low-value recycling or is exported for downcycling, limiting Kenya's ability to capture domestic value.

Rather than expanding compliance obligations to new sectors or burdening recycled-material producers, we believe the smarter path is to link what is already being collected to industrial reuse applications — transforming EPR from a waste-management model into a materials-regeneration system that benefits local manufacturers and communities alike.

1.1 How This Could Work:

1. Channel existing EPR plastics into durable construction uses
    - Packaging recyclate (high-density polyethylene (HDPE), polypropylene (PP), polyethylene terephthalate (PET)) collected by KEPRO and others could be supplied to circular manufacturers like Takazuri to replace part of their virgin polymer input.
    - This creates verified domestic reuse pathways, extending plastic life cycles from single-use to 30+ year construction applications.
2. Reward producers through "industrial reuse credits"
    - Packaging companies that supply their collected recyclate into certified products (like Climatile™) could earn EPR compliance credits toward their recovery targets.

- This would help them meet obligations while demonstrating social and environmental impact through tangible circular outcomes.

3. Develop a national “Recycled Plastics Marketplace”
   - In partnership with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), KEPRO, and KEBS, Kenya could establish an accredited digital platform matching recyclers with industrial buyers.
   - The marketplace would list available polymers, quality grades, and traceability certificates — ensuring transparency and consistent feedstock quality for manufacturers.
4. Allocate a small share of EPR funds for quality verification
   - Without increasing levies, dedicate 1–2% of existing producer contributions to:
     - Testing and certifying recyclate quality through KEBS.
     - Developing a simple “Material Passport” system that verifies polymer type & other material content levels.
5. Recognize high-value reuse as national circularity success
   - Products like Climatile™ can become proof-points for Kenya’s circular economy: local waste transformed into climate-resilient infrastructure.
   - This also supports Vision 2030 goals for green manufacturing and aligns with Kenya’s Buy Kenya, Build Kenya policy.

2.2 By linking existing EPR systems to construction innovation:

- No new regulation or fees are required — only smarter coordination.
- Producers meet compliance targets locally instead of exporting recyclate.
- Manufacturers gain stable access to verified recycled polymers.
- KEBS & KEPRO strengthen traceability and data visibility across the plastic value chain.
- Circular construction becomes a measurable outcome of EPR — not an afterthought.

In short, Kenya can close the loop without closing opportunities — turning every collected bottle, cap, and container into a building block for climate-smart infrastructure.

2. Certification Systems — Bridging Global Standards and Local Realities

Kenya now leads Africa in EDGE certification uptake (> 1 million m^2 certified by 2025). The SGBI, co-developed by AAK and UN-Habitat, complements this with a regional lens rewarding passive design (45%), resource efficiency (30%), and social impact (10%).

2.1 How EDGE and SGBI can Work Together:

We have seen that the two frameworks can—and should—function complementarily:

- EDGE links projects to international finance and measurable efficiency metrics.
- SGBI values contextual performance, passive cooling, and local materials.
- Dual certification enables both global credibility and local authenticity.

For Climatile™, this dual approach validates embodied-carbon reduction (EDGE) while rewarding local circular innovation (SGBI).

Policy opportunity: Harmonize EDGE & SGBI under the National Green Code; make at least one pathway mandatory for public and county projects.

3. What We Have Learned About Testing — The Missing Link

Working with KEBS, KGBS, KEPRO, manufacturers, and Danish Industry (DI) through the Loop Trade Show, we confirmed a shared challenge:

Kenya lacks enough specialized testing infrastructure to validate new materials.

3.1 Field Realities:

- Few accredited labs: critical tests such as UV exposure, fire testing, impact, basic flexural and tensile tests cannot yet be done locally.
- Reliance on foreign labs: our Climatile™ samples went to Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) (in China, Italy) and Badische Anilin-& Sodafabrik (BASF) (in Germany)—adding cost, documentation, and months of delay.
- Recognition gap: international results aren't automatically accepted by KEBS; innovators face repeat testing.
- Cost barrier: for small manufacturers, validation often costs more than R&D.

At Loop Nairobi, Danish partners stressed how Denmark's green transition succeeded because of accessible, accredited testing networks that de-risked innovation. Kenya can replicate this model.

3.2 What Needs to Change:

1. Upgrade KEBS infrastructure – broaden accreditation to recycled composites & solar-integrated systems; create regional hubs with universities.
2. Streamline validation – fast-track recycled materials; accept mutual recognition of American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) / International Organization for Standardization (ISO) results.
3. Finance local testing – create a Green Product Validation Fund under KEPS/KAM.
4. Link testing to certification – require KEBS-tested products for listing in Jenga Green and SGBI libraries.
5. Investment in additional equipment for material testing on existing labs, universities and even in collaboration with private entities to support innovation testing and certification.

Insight: Kenya's challenge is not invention—it is verification. Testing must become a national innovation infrastructure.

4. Financial Mechanisms and Solar Incentives — Unlocking Market Adoption

Kenya's housing and construction sectors remain cost-sensitive, with mortgage penetration below 2% of GDP. Yet solar and green-finance incentives are beginning to change this landscape.

4.1 Existing Regulatory Incentives for Solar Integration:

- VAT & Import-Duty Exemptions – Renewable-energy products, including solar modules and mounting systems, are zero-rated for VAT and exempt from import duty, reducing upfront costs.
- Accelerated Depreciation & Investment Deductions – Solar equipment qualifies for accelerated capital allowances and tax incentives for businesses investing in green infrastructure.
- Manufacturing Incentives – Solar component manufacturing enjoys special economic zone (SEZ) benefits and duty relief on raw-material imports—opening pathways for local production of solar-ready building materials like Climatile™.
- Net-Metering & Distributed Solar Policies – Favourable licensing and grid-connection rules for rooftop and mini-grid systems make integrated solar roofs financially attractive.
- Draft Green Fiscal Incentives Policy – Proposes further tax relief for solar-passive structures and recycled-content materials, aligning with circular construction goals.

4.2 What This Means for Products like Climatile™ :

- Cost competitiveness – Solar-ready Climatile™ modules can leverage VAT and duty exemptions, narrowing price gaps with traditional roofing.
- Finance alignment – Green loans from the Kenya Mortgage Refinance Company (KMRC), Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB), and Absa can bundle roofing and solar under one repayment plan.
- Local value-chain boost – Manufacturing Climatile™ parts and accessories within SEZs can qualify for duty relief and local-content incentives.
- Policy convergence – Climatile™ embodies both circularity and renewable-energy goals, aligning with multiple incentive streams.

4.3 What Still Needs to Happen:

- Include solar-integrated recycled products in official incentive eligibility lists.
- Coordinate between the Ministry of Energy (MoE), KEBS, and KGBS to recognize such hybrid innovations in both solar and building-certification programs.
- Encourage roof + solar bundle financing, expanding PAYGo models from energy access to construction.

5. Cultural and Behavioural Insights — Shaping Demand

Our interviews and installations show that material choice in Kenya often communicates status more than performance. Clay tiles still signal prestige; corrugated sheets denote practicality; *makuti* (thatched roof) is stigmatized as “low-tech.”

To shift perception, we are:

- Demonstrating modern aesthetics of recycled materials, highlighting customization capabilities in colours and textures.
- Framing sustainability as aspirational, not alternative.
- Building financial pathways so green options are attainable for the middle market.

6. Policy Roadmap — Turning Policy into Practice:

Area	Current State	What's Needed
EPR/KEPS	Focused on packaging	Include construction materials; direct funds to testing & training
Building Code	Enacted but uneven	Embed measurable sustainability indicators
KEBS	Limited composite testing	Upgrade labs; adopt life cycle assessment (LCA) / environmental product declaration (EPD) standards
Finance	Building-level only	Extend green lending to materials & solar products
Certification	Voluntary	Make mandatory for public & affordable projects
Skills	<10% trained	Launch Green Fundi Program with TVETs/KGBS
Procurement	Price-driven	Add recycled-content and certified-material thresholds

(Table 1: Takazuri's Policy Roadmap)

Conclusion

Our journey with Climatile™ has shown both the promise and friction of Kenya's green-building transition. The frameworks exist, but testing, finance, and perception still hold back scale. The timing for sustainable solutions in construction that offer clear performance advantages over existing products could not be better.

In an increasingly interconnected world, social and market trends that favor sustainability are expanding beyond developed economies into emerging markets like Kenya at remarkable speed. Awareness among local stakeholders and buyers continues to grow, with many now seeking "better" and "greener" solutions as a matter of principle and core values.

This is the moment for policymakers and industry stakeholders to reinforce that momentum — to support the shift toward resilience and adaptation in a changing environment. Experience from developed markets shows that the successful adoption of sustainable products must be paired with well-designed incentives that help shift habitual market dynamics toward better alternatives. This is particularly critical in emerging markets such as Kenya, where price sensitivity can slow the uptake of innovative solutions unless policy and financial frameworks help level the playing field.

By expanding KEBS capacity, aligning certification systems, and fully activating solar & circular incentives, Kenya can make sustainable construction not a niche, but the national norm—creating jobs, resilience, and pride in local innovation.

When policy, proof, and people align, green building becomes inevitable.

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