*See notes on p.2 for how to use

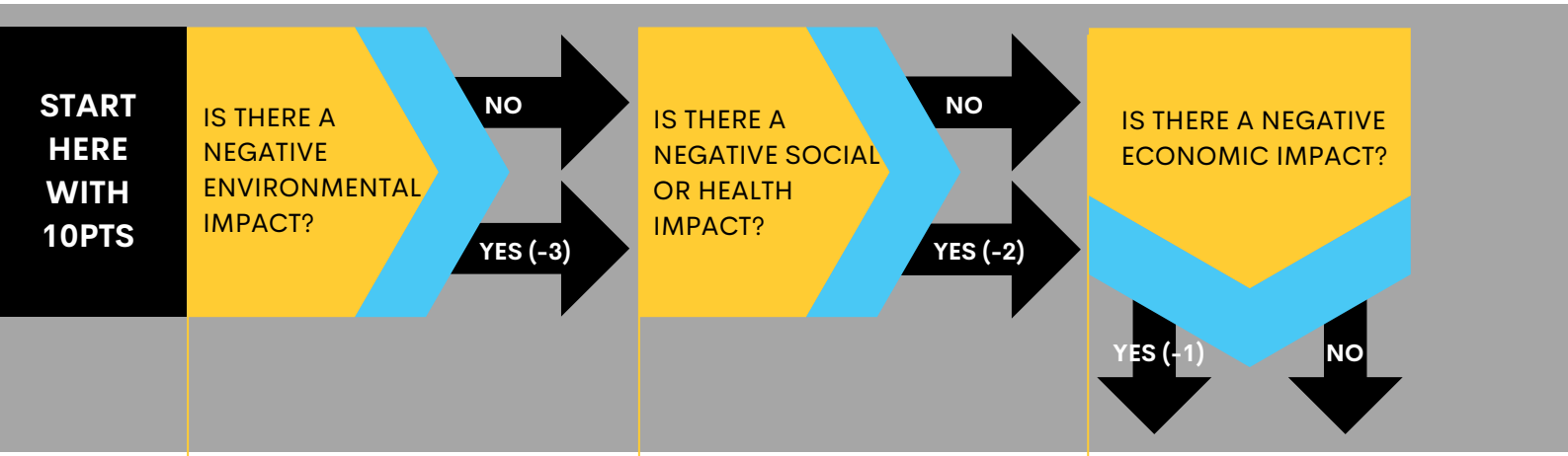
TRASH HERO WORLD

REAL OR FALSE SOLUTION?
A ZERO WASTE EVALUATION TOOL.

How to use this tool

This tool helps you to assess different waste management options.

Always start with 10 points. Answer each question and then move on to the next, until you reach the end. Remember to deduct points if the answer asks you to do so.
Below we show you what to consider when answering the questions.
There is also a guide to the scores at the end.



Negative **environmental impact** means harming the planet. This might include:

- polluting air, water or soil with toxic chemicals
- using non-renewable resources like fossil fuels
- destroying habitats for wildlife
- creating unrecyclable waste

Nature can be harmed during the production of a material, while it is being used, or also after use.

If there is an unacceptable negative impact on nature, minus 3 points.

Social impact affects the health and wellbeing of people and their communities.

Some examples of negative social impacts:

- toxic by-products that make people ill
- cutting access to local resources like water
- unfair treatment of workers
- polluting land or water sources used for farming

If there is an unacceptable negative social impact, minus 2 points.

Economic impacts relate to income. Negative impacts will reduce income in the long term, or make life harder financially for the community. This could be due to:

- loss of jobs
- loss of income from tourism
- making people use a product or process that is more expensive than normal

Remember, all new projects will need *some* expense! Think if that cost can be recovered later.

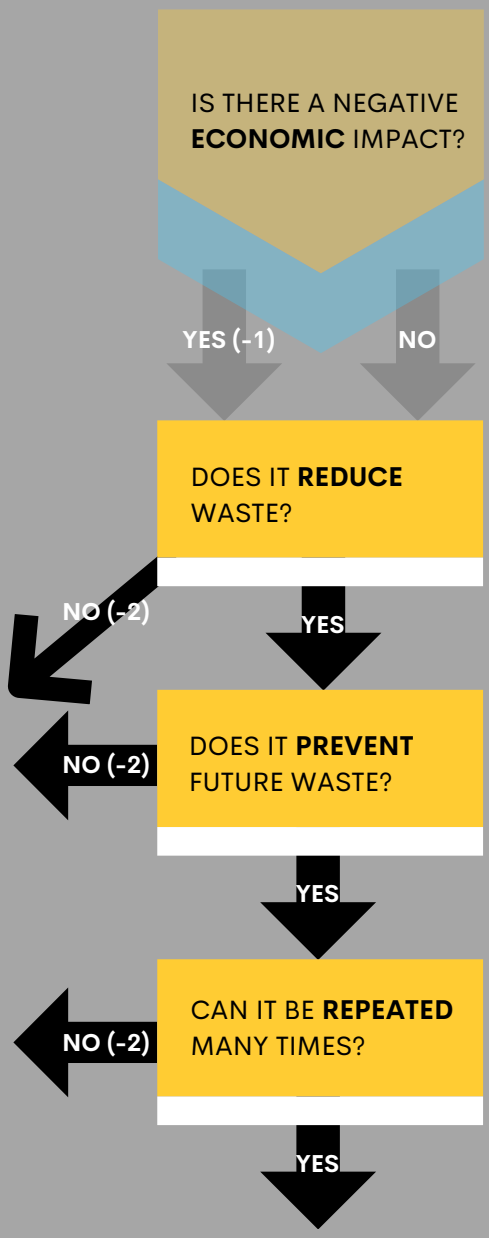
If there is an unacceptable negative economic impact, minus 1 point.

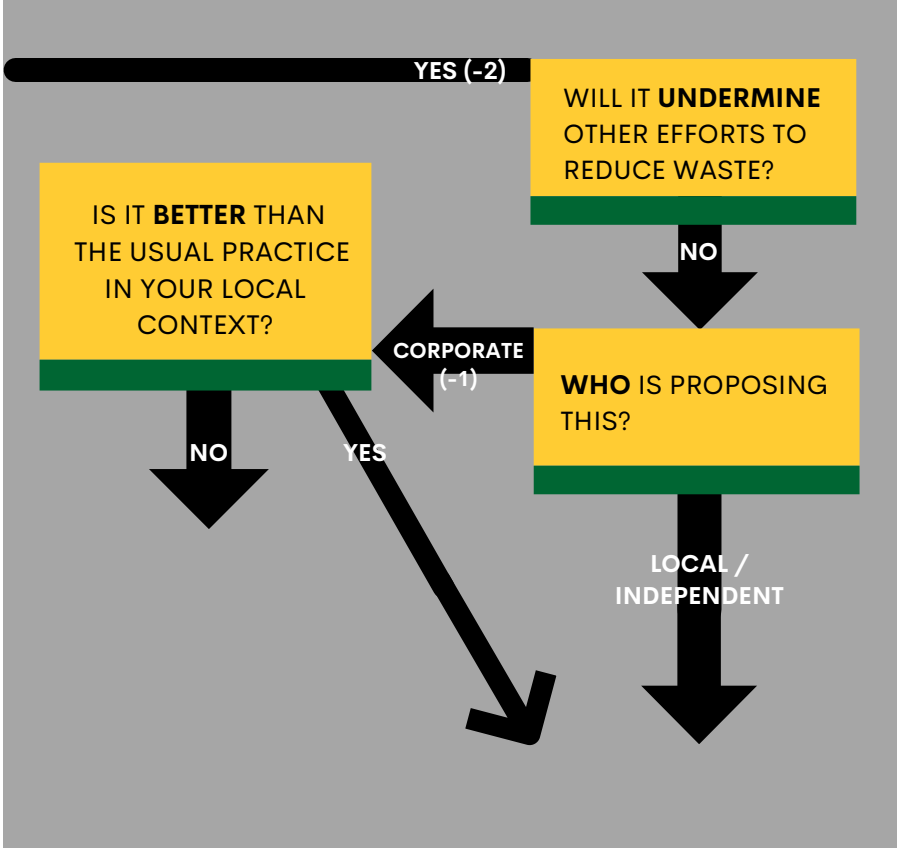
Questions about waste

DOES IT REDUCE WASTE?
Is there less waste created with this option?
Answer **YES** if there is less to recycle or dispose of.
Answer **NO** if the amount of waste is the same or more. For example, replacing one single-use item with another made from a different material.
If 'no', minus 2 points.

DOES IT PREVENT FUTURE WASTE?
Answer **YES** if it means fewer new things will need to be produced. For example, something that allows reuse, refill or repair.
Answer **NO** if it means the amount of new products will stay the same or increase.
If 'no', minus 2 points.

CAN IT BE REPEATED MANY TIMES?
Answer **YES** if it is a continuous circular process. This means the material can be used again and again in its original form and with the same purpose. For example, recycling metal or cleaning and refilling glass bottles.
Answer **NO** if it is a temporary process (one or just a few loops), that only delays the final disposal of the material. For example, turning plastic bottles into carpets or clothing. We call this "downcycling" as the material is changed and usually not used again.
If 'no', minus 2 points.





Final questions

WILL IT UNDERMINE OTHER EFFORTS TO REDUCE WASTE?
Could this block, delay or weaken attempts to *reduce* waste?
For example, you might answer 'yes' when considering an incinerator. This is expensive technology and needs a continuous supply of waste to operate. This means we are "locked in" to produce new waste, so there would be no incentive to, say, ban plastic bags.
If you answer 'yes', minus 2 points.

WHO IS PROPOSING THIS?
Who is behind this initiative? Is it sponsored by a big plastic-producing company? If 'yes', answer "corporate" and minus 1 point (it might be greenwashing). If it is a small, social enterprise answer "local /independent".

IS IT BETTER THAN THE USUAL PRACTICE IN YOUR LOCAL CONTEXT?
Think about what usually happens to the waste where you live. How does that compare with this solution? For example, if plastic bags are normally burned, then making them into plastic bricks could be seen as a safer (temporary) solution. If you are not sure which option is better, use this tool to assess the usual practice and compare the scores.

Understanding your results

UNACCEPTABLE SOLUTION

If you have a score of 0-4, this is a false solution. It has failed all 3 tests:

- is it sustainable for nature, people and the economy?
- is it a long term solution to reduce and prevent waste?
- does it improve the current situation where you are?

In addition, if it is being proposed by a big company, it could also be greenwashing. Avoid! Instead look at starting or improving waste separation in your community.

TEMPORARY / TRANSITIONAL SOLUTION

Solutions in this category usually score 5 - 9 points. They are better than the current situation, but will usually focus on improving the fate of existing waste and not on changing the system that produces the waste in the first place.

Some ideas will be better than others, but none are going to get us to zero waste in the long term. With that in mind, we may accept these solutions in the short or medium term if they:

- are not expensive / need no long-term investment
- create durable products for long-term use
- do not increase pollution (for example microplastic fibres in clothing)
- are not promoted as real solutions

Does your solution pass these tests? A score of 7+ will normally succeed. If your score is lower, think how it could be improved. For example, could you do this project without the help of a big company? Could you make roof tiles instead of toys to minimise dangers to health? Test again and see if it passes. If not, Trash Hero would not consider it (even if others would).

Always remember, because these are temporary solutions, they should only ever be seen as "Plan B" - after or alongside our "Plan A" of waste prevention and separation.

REAL SOLUTION

If you answer all the questions and still have 10 points, you have a real solution! This can be a part of any zero waste system: it has environmental, social and economic benefits, as well as reducing waste for years to come. Examples might include a water refill network or a community garden with a composting facility.

You may wonder, why are there so few real solutions? Actually, there are many, but we don't hear much about them. Big business has no interest in changing the system, while companies with a new product or technology to sell will promote it widely. Simple solutions like composting do not have a big marketing budget behind them! It's part of our mission at Trash Hero to help these ideas reach a wider audience.

This tool is not perfect!

Two people using this tool for the same solution may get different results. This is because the final score depends on:

- how much you understand or know about the solution
- your opinion on each question, for example what counts as a negative effect

To get the best results, try to find out as much information as possible to help you decide your answers. Sometimes the company selling the solution might try to hide some of its downsides. If in doubt, ask Trash Hero World or your country coordinator.