



Douglas OHI
Advancing
Zero Waste in
Construction

Small, Practical Initiatives Driving Circular Economy Principles
A White Paper for International Day of Zero Waste 2026

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Executive Summary

The construction industry plays a critical role in advancing global sustainability goals, particularly in reducing waste and improving resource efficiency. As the United Nations marks the International Day of Zero Waste on 30 March 2026, the need for practical and scalable solutions across all sectors has never been more pressing.

At Douglas OHI, sustainability is embedded across our operations through our Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) framework and site-level practices. This white paper highlights how simple, practical initiatives implemented at project sites can reduce construction waste, support circular economy principles, and deliver measurable operational benefits.

Drawing on examples from our projects across Oman, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, this paper demonstrates how initiatives such as repurposing construction materials, systematic waste segregation and creative reuse solutions help minimise landfill waste while improving efficiency and cost management.

These initiatives reinforce Douglas OHI's commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, while contributing to the broader ambition of building a more sustainable construction industry across the GCC.



Introduction

On 30 March 2026, the United Nations observes the International Day of Zero Waste, an initiative designed to accelerate global efforts to reduce waste generation and advance responsible consumption and production.

While the 2026 theme highlights food waste, the observance serves as a broader reminder that every industry has a role to play in reducing waste and promoting circular economic models.

The construction sector is particularly important in this transition. Globally, construction and demolition activities

account for a significant proportion of waste generation, making improved resource management an industry priority.

At Douglas OHI, sustainability is embedded within both our strategy and operational practices. As we mark the International Day of Zero Waste, we share examples from our project sites demonstrating how small, practical actions can contribute to meaningful environmental impact while strengthening operational efficiency.

As Aaron Hennessy, CEnv, Managing Director of Douglas OHI, notes:

“Sustainable construction is not only about major technological change. It is also about the everyday decisions made on our project sites. By embedding practical circular economy practices into our operations, Douglas OHI is demonstrating that environmental responsibility and operational efficiency can go hand in hand.”



Our Commitment to Zero Waste and Sustainability

Douglas OHI's Sustainability Policy and ESG programme place responsible resource management at the centre of our Environmental pillar.

Our approach focuses on:



Energy management



Water conservation



Climate action



Waste reduction and resource efficiency

These priorities align with global sustainability frameworks and reinforce our commitment to SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

Across our operations, we implement the three fundamental principles of the circular economy:



Materials such as wood, metal and concrete are assessed on site for reuse opportunities, enabling surplus resources to be repurposed rather than discarded. Waste segregation practices ensure recyclable materials are diverted from landfill wherever possible, while digital workflows help reduce paper consumption across operations.

By embedding these practices within everyday construction activities, Douglas OHI is supporting the transition towards a more circular and resource-efficient construction sector.

Spotlight Initiative

Reusing Construction Materials for Temporary Barricades

One example currently underway at our project sites demonstrates how simple resource management decisions can generate significant environmental and operational value.

Site Initiative

Discarded wooden materials generated during construction activities are being repurposed to fabricate temporary barricades. Used nails are collected, sorted and reused to support the same purpose.

This approach



Reduces construction waste



Maximises the value of available materials



Minimises the need for additional procurement

The initiative directly supports SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production by promoting material reuse and reducing waste generation.


When project specifications do not require a specific barricading standard for temporary applications, repurposed wooden barricades provide a practical alternative to newly purchased metal systems. In addition to lowering waste volumes, this practice delivers cost management and improved resource efficiency.

Circular Practices Across Douglas OHI Project Sites

The barricade initiative reflects a wider culture of sustainability across Douglas OHI's operations in Oman, the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

Across our project sites, teams are implementing a range of practical waste-reduction initiatives, including:

Creative Material Reuse	Concrete Repurposing	Systematic Waste Segregation
<p>Project teams have introduced waste management campaigns that transform surplus materials into functional site assets such as chairs, benches, permit boxes, dustbins, signboard stands and banners.</p>	<p>Concrete waste is minimised through repurposing foundation blocks and converting surplus material into vehicle wheel stoppers, reducing landfill disposal and project costs.</p>	<p>Routine segregation of wood, metal and concrete ensures that materials are assessed for reuse or recycling before disposal.</p>



These practices demonstrate how operational innovation at the project level can significantly reduce environmental impact while improving efficiency and cost performance.

Broader Impact and Industry Value

Transforming potential waste into useful site assets generates multiple benefits for projects and stakeholders:

- Lower material procurement costs
- Reduced landfill contributions
- Improved operational efficiency
- Stronger alignment with client ESG objectives

These outcomes demonstrate that sustainable construction practices can deliver both environmental and commercial value.

As sustainability expectations continue to grow across the construction sector, practical initiatives such as these play an important role in helping contractors meet evolving regulatory requirements and client sustainability commitments.

Future Outlook

Looking ahead, Douglas OHI will continue to expand these initiatives by:

- Identifying new opportunities for material reuse and resource efficiency
- Sharing best practices through HSSE communications and internal knowledge platforms
- Collaborating with clients and partners to scale sustainable construction practices

Advancing the circular economy within construction requires collective action across the value chain, including contractors, consultants, suppliers and project owners.

Douglas OHI remains committed to contributing to this transition through innovation, collaboration and responsible site practices.

Conclusion

The International Day of Zero Waste 2026 reminds us that meaningful change is often driven by consistent, practical actions at the operational level.

At Douglas OHI, we are demonstrating that construction does not have to be wasteful. Through initiatives such as repurposing wood and nails for barricades, reusing concrete materials and implementing systematic waste segregation, our teams are reducing environmental impact while enhancing project efficiency.

By embedding circular thinking into everyday construction practices, we are helping build a more sustainable and resource-efficient future for the industry and the communities we serve.

Together, we can move beyond Zero Waste as a day and make it a daily standard.



About the Author

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Peter Baker is the Regional HSSE Manager at Douglas OHI, responsible for overseeing health, safety, sustainability and environmental performance across the company's operations in Oman, the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

With extensive experience in construction safety and environmental management, Peter works closely with project teams to embed best practices that improve operational safety, reduce environmental impact and strengthen ESG performance across Douglas OHI projects.



References

- Douglas OHI Sustainability & HSSE Policy Documents
- Featured Stories on douglasohi.com (International Day of Zero Waste; Promoting Sustainability through Waste Management)
- United Nations International Day of Zero Waste resources

