

Leading the Change: CIT's Path to a Zero Waste Future

Founded in 1964, the Cambridge Group of Institutions commenced its journey with Cambridge School. Over time, it grew, incorporating Cambridge Institute of Technology(CIT), Cambridge PU College, and Cambridge Degree College. Their primary responsibility as an educational institution was to deliver quality education but also to cultivate a pristine and green environment and to imbue students with ecologically progressive mindsets.



Mr. Srinidhi played a pivotal role in the progress of this initiative. While serving as a lecturer at Krupanidhi College, we approached him to engage student volunteers for a painting activity at Madiwala Market. Impressed by the impact of the work, he continued to support the cause even after transitioning to a new role at CIT. Recognizing the potential of our efforts, Mr. Srinidhi introduced VEDAN to CIT's CEO, Mr. Nithin, suggesting a collaboration. At the time, CIT was seeking to adopt a nearby street plagued by unmanaged waste, with the goal of implementing a sustainable waste management solution. This introduction marked the beginning of a meaningful partnership.

In the first meeting, Vedan helped them understand that before addressing external waste issues, they must first implement effective waste management within their own campus. This realization sparked a greater ambition—to transform CIT into a model Zero Waste Campus and convert Waste into a Resource.

Inspired by the new plan and motivated to "Practice What We Preach", they dived right in. Under Vedan's guidance, the institution embarked on a structured approach to study its waste management systems and establish best practices for implementation. In just three months, between October 2019 and December 2019, the transformation was successfully put in place. The only condition set by CIT CEO, Mr. Nithin Mohan, was that the model developed should create a ripple effect, inspiring and influencing other institutions. Vedan, in turn, emphasized that the institution must work with the same speed and enthusiasm as Vedan. This mutual understanding and shared determination ultimately paved the way for CITech's transformation into a Zero Waste Campus.

As a result of these efforts, CIT received several prestigious recognitions, including:

Blu Green Awards 2025 – By BBMP

Hosted by BBMP and Bangalore Climate Action Cell – presented by Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.



Best Solid Waste Management – Conference of Indian Industries 2023

The "**Best Solid Waste Management**" award at the Conference of Indian Industries 2023, presented by Mr Venu Shanbhag, Co-Chairman, CII-SR Task Force on Holistic Sustainability & ESG & Managing Director, Saint-Gobain Sekurit India Ltd Mr N Mahesan, Chief Engineer SWM, Greater Chennai Corporation, Government of Tamil Nadu.



The Greenpreneur – Sustainability Trend Setter award

The Greenpreneur – Sustainability Trend Setter award by Vyapaar Jagat, presented to CIT Chairman, Mr. D. K. Mohan



An Appreciation Letter from the Town Municipal Council (TMC), Moodubidire



Special jury mention – 1st CSR film festival on 26th March 2022.

The Institute was awarded a special jury mention - environment film for our zero-waste campus initiative in the 1st CSR film festival on 26th March 2022. The award was conferred by the Padmavibhushan Dr. K.H. Sancheti.



Aren't you curious to know what exactly got them these awards? Let us read more about CIT's journey to becoming the first College in India to manage its own waste in the campus at a micro-level.

CIT's Roadmap to ZWC

Like any other institutions, CIT previously created a lot of single use waste by using liners in their bins, using plastic and paper plates, utensils and packaging containers, etc. All their waste would be mixed and therefore treated as waste and was disposed of by way of burning in campus, dumping in blackspots or sending to landfill.



Liners in bins



Waste dumped in campus blackspot



Waste taken to landfill

Step 1: Eliminate Waste at Source



Problem

We identified the major source of waste – plastic from food containers, utensils, bags etc.

Solution

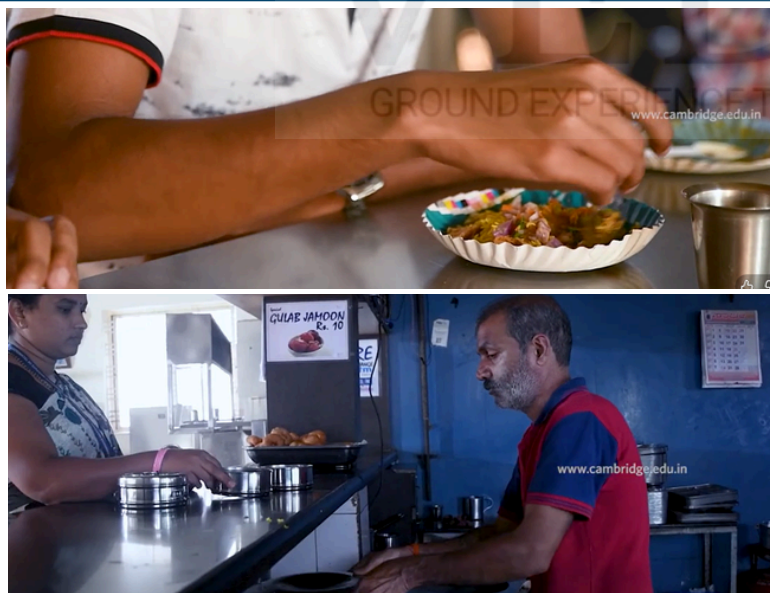
All single use plastic items were banned.

Problem

500 units of single use Plastic and Paper cutlery and plates were used every day

Solution

It was replaced by steel plates and cutlery



Problem

Plastic food containers used for parcels within the campus

Solution

Steel tiffin boxes were provided to each department for faculty lunch parcels.

Step 2: Reduce



Problem

Plastic food containers used for parcels in the hostels

Solution

Students were informed to rinse the plastic containers before disposal so that it can be sent for proper processing instead of going to mixed waste.

Problem

Sanitary napkin waste is in high quantity and would be in mixed waste

Solution

Menstrual Hygiene session was conducted for girls, where they were introduced to cloth pads and menstrual cups. Specific bins with instruction boards were kept in the washrooms for disposal of sanitary napkins only, so they can be sent for proper processing.



Step 3: Rot



Problem

This is one section, that did not have problems. Food waste was sent to piggeries and vegetable peels to cows, remaining wet waste was sent to compost grid located at a corner in the campus.

Solution

Better leaf and food composter were installed

Step 4: Recycle



Problem

Mixed waste was burnt, sent to landfill or dumped in blackspots

Solution

Dry Waste Aggregation Centre was set-up on the campus, where the waste was sorted and stored in different categories and then sold to a vendor who then sent them to the correct processing centres to be used as a resource. They started with 8 different categories, which then became 20 and now waste is being sorted into 44 different categories and earning an income for the institute



Other reject waste is collected by an empanelled vendor for a cost which is covered by the income from the sale of dry waste.

Step 5: Reuse



Problem

Disposable banners were made for every event at the campus

Solution

Digital panels were installed to reduce waste and for annual programs, the banners were prepared and stored to be reused yearly.

Step 6: Sustainability



Awareness sessions to HOD and Dept Coordinators



Awareness to Housekeeping Staff



Awareness to Admin staff



Awareness to teaching staff

The staff and students at the campus did not know and understand the concept of Zero Waste.

Several awareness campaigns were conducted within the campus. Alongside these campaigns, a strict monitoring mechanism was put in place with the goal of ensuring the sustainability of a Zero-Waste campus. Vedan organized numerous awareness sessions for students, faculty, and staff, including security and housekeeping personnel, as well as Heads of Departments, emphasizing the importance of waste segregation.

Every school year, the students are provided awareness sessions during their induction programme. They have a dedicated zero-waste coordinator to look after the smooth working of the ZWC and whose salary is recovered from the sale of dry waste.

Hope the above was a good learning experience for you! Now let's get our hands dirty and get into the numbers!

Measuring Impact: Waste Reduction and Carbon Savings

As this Zero Waste Campus initiative was launched just before the COVID-19 lockdown in December 2019, the most accurate assessment of its impact comes from analyzing data after normalcy resumed. For this reason, our impact analysis focuses on the period from October 2022 onward, when daily life—and waste generation—returned to typical levels.

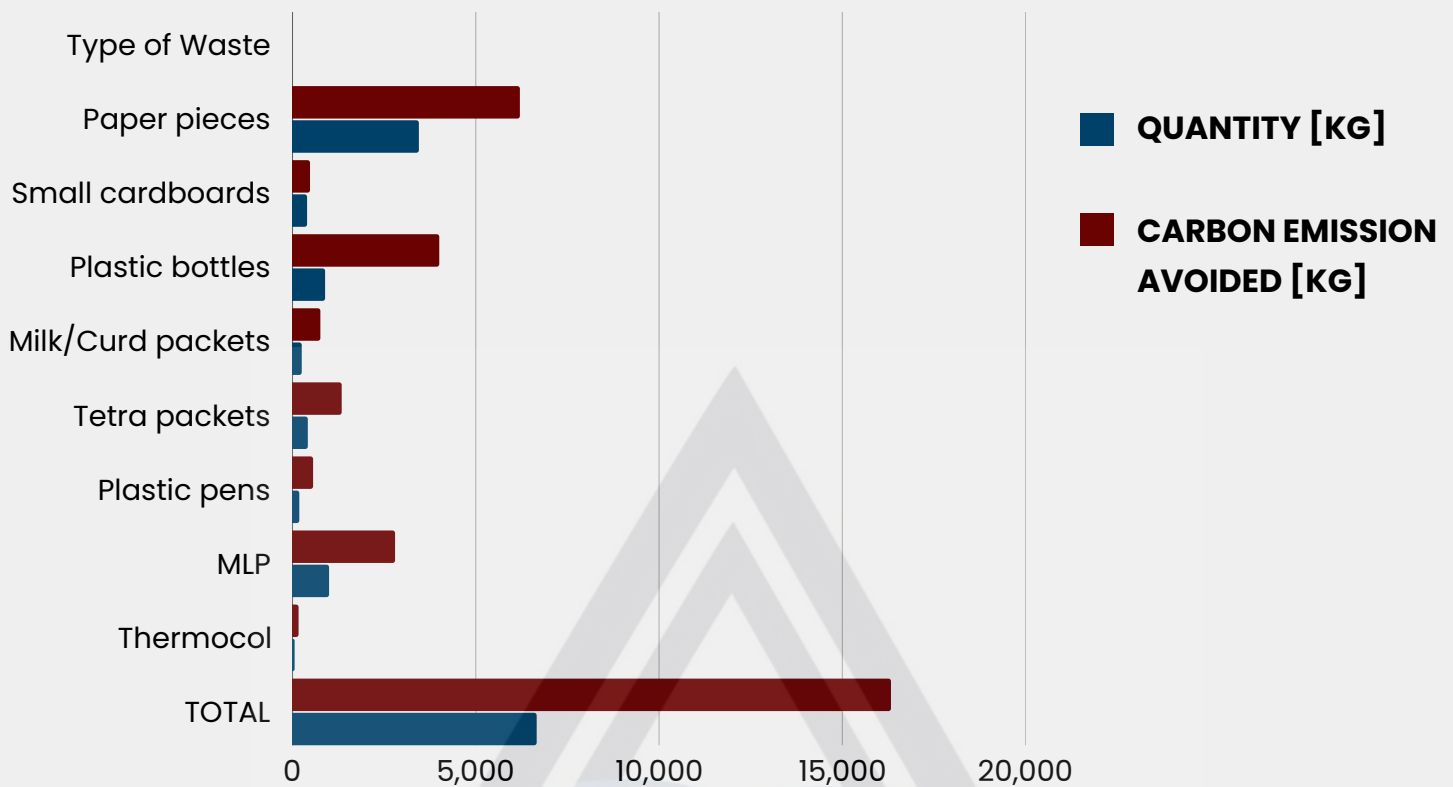
One striking example of progress is in the reduction of torn paper waste. From October 2022 to July 2023, the campus generated 3,449 kilograms of torn paper. In 2024, that number dropped significantly to just 1,763 kilograms—a remarkable 50% reduction.

This improvement directly translated into environmental benefits. During the initial period, 75 trees were saved thanks to paper recycling efforts. In 2024, continued waste reduction saved an additional 38 trees.

Moreover, the impact extends beyond just waste volume. Every kilogram of paper waste burned releases approximately 1 kg of CO₂, while burning plastic releases around 2.9 kg of CO₂ per kilogram. By diverting low-quality waste from incineration, we've effectively prevented a significant amount of carbon emissions from entering the atmosphere—contributing meaningfully to the fight against climate change.

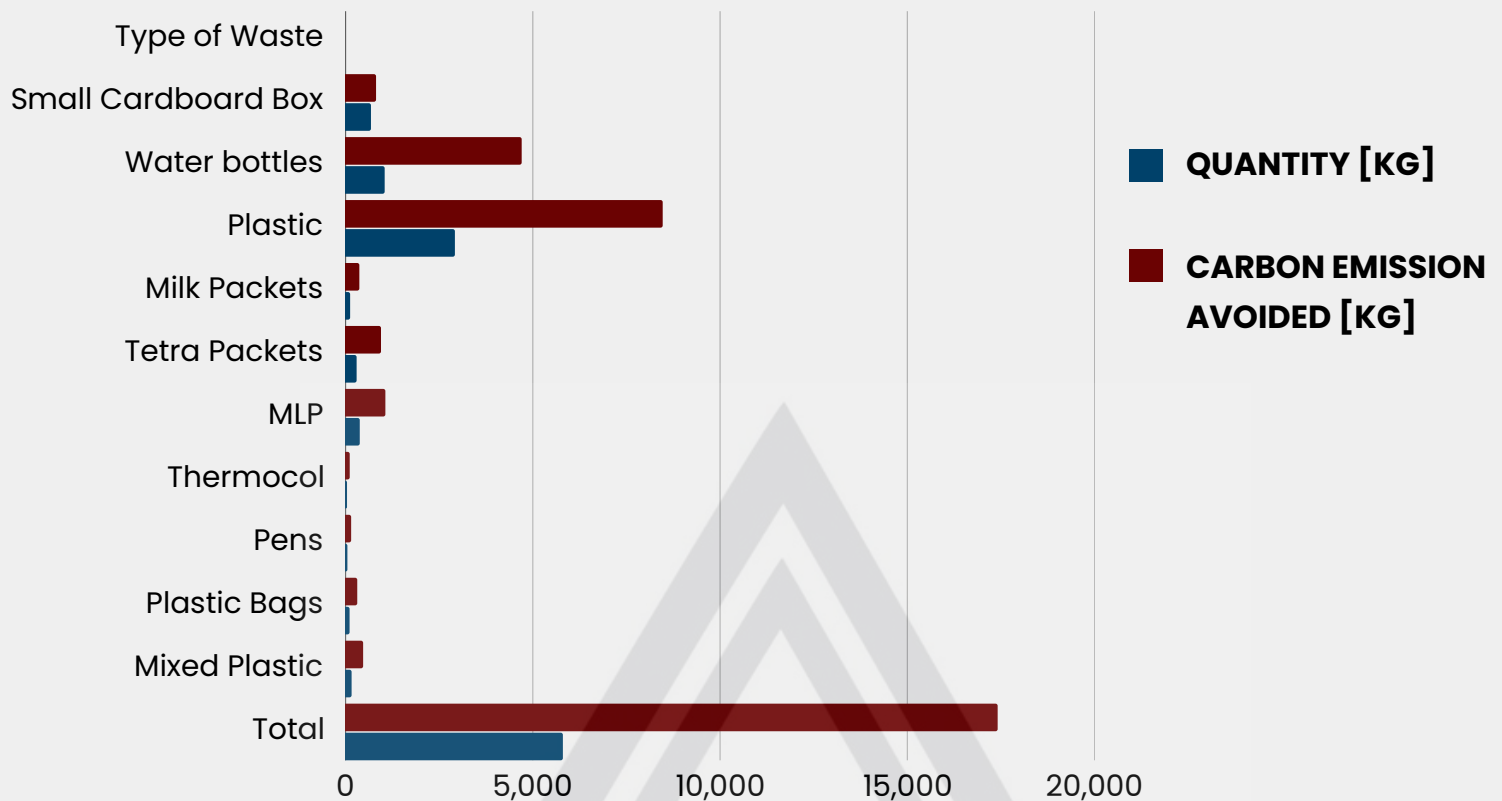
Oct 2022 to July 2023					
Sl No	Type of Waste	Quantity (Kg)	Estimated cost per kg	Amount earned	Carbon Emission Avoided (kg)
1	Paper pieces	3,449	5	17,245	6,204
2	Small cardboards	400	4	1,600	480
3	Plastic bottles	891	15	13,365	4,005
4	Milk/Curd packets	254	8	2,032	762
5	Tetra packets	420	10	4,200	1,344
6	Plastic pens	188	7	1,316	564
7	MLP	1,000	6	6,000	2,800
8	Thermocol	60	5	300	168
	TOTAL	6,662	60	46,058	16,326

Waste as Resource (oct 2022 to July 2023)



Jan 2024 to Dec 2024					
Sl No	Type of Waste	Quantity (Kg)	Estimated cost per kg	Amount earned	Carbon Emission Avoided (kg)
1	Small Cardboard Box	679	4	2,716	815
2	Water bottles	1,045	15	15,675	4,703
3	Plastic	2,920	6	17,520	8,468
4	Milk Packets	123	8	984	369
5	Tetra Packets	296	10	2,960	947
6	MLP	380	6	2,280	1,064
7	Thermocol	40	5	200	112
8	Pens	50	7	350	150
9	Plastic Bags	108	6	648	313
10	Mixed Plastic	162	6	972	470
	Total	5,803	73	44,305	17,411

Waste as Resource (Jan 2022 to Dec 2024)



The Ripple Effect: Zero Waste Movement Expands Beyond CIT

What began as a dedicated initiative at CIT to become a Zero Waste Campus (ZWC) has now inspired a far-reaching impact—stretching all the way to Moodubidire and resonating throughout Bangalore.

Thanks to these pioneering efforts and hands-on guidance, Moodubidire's Town Municipal Corporation took a keen interest in replicating CIT's success. The head of institutions of TMC Moodubidire communicated with CIT to understand the Zero Waste Campus process. As a result, several offices and educational institutions across the region have now successfully transitioned into Zero Waste Campuses. [\[Click here to read the full story.\]](#)

The momentum didn't stop there. Right here in Bangalore, our work has begun transforming key institutions as well. Notably, the Office of the Commissioner of Police (all Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners led by Commissioner of Police Mr Dayanand visited CIT campus to understand ZWC), Newtown Public School in Yelahanka, and a major ZWC initiative launched by the Yelahanka Zone—all stand as proud examples of what's possible when community-driven sustainability meets civic support.

