



Zero Waste: Problems Become Opportunities

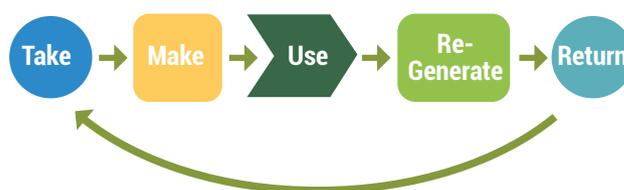
Waste Prevention and Management



Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

A circular economy is ‘where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste minimised’.

European Commission 2015



The **Circular Economy White Papers** present the contributions of the Interreg MED Green Growth community and their efforts in transitioning towards a circular economy in the Mediterranean, in the areas of:

- Resource Efficiency
- Green and Smart Public Services
- Waste Prevention and Management
- Competitiveness and Innovation

The **Interreg MED Green Growth** community has created four Thematic Working Groups as a tool for collaboration and communication within its 14 modular projects to aid in the quality, efficiency, scalability and replicability of the project results.

Waste Prevention and Management

The third **Thematic Working Group** that included **2 modular projects** addressed **waste reduction, prevention and management solutions**.

Objective

To stress the importance of the full utilisation of resources throughout their life cycle to realise a Circular Economy. The goals were, not only to promote solutions leading to the reduction of both organic (livestock) and inorganic waste, but also to map out technologies, systems, and strategies for proper waste management.

Results

- Data sets produced to map and test the Best Available Technologies, Products and Methodologies to identify the most promising zero-waste solutions for the Agro-food sector
- Economic benefits such as resource efficiency and new business, marketing and innovation opportunities related to the technology and systems involved in waste reduction and management were also highlighted.
- Policy guidelines based on 4 demonstrative Struvite Precipitation (SP) plants were produced to stimulate innovation adoption and to set-up a common suitable legal framework for struvite as fertilizer.



- The featured Modular Projects partnered with 90 Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to test and implement solutions through 4 pilot applications and case studies focused on organic and inorganic waste.

Modular Projects:

REINWASTE, RE-LIVE WASTE

Main Targets:

bio-waste, organic waste, inorganic waste, KETs, BATs.

Relevant CE Indicators:

waste generation, overall recycling rates, recycling rates for specific waste

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP 3

Waste Prevention and Management



CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

- The overproduction of nitrogen and nitrogen levels in relation to the EU Nitrate Directive
- The over-application of slurry and the need to treat it and other materials such as manure before application
- The lack of treatment of agro-food waste, both organic and inorganic

SOLUTIONS PROVIDED BY MODULAR PROJECTS

- Mapping of Best Available Technologies (BATs) and Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) to identify the most promising zero-waste solutions
- Project pilot actions studying the level of effectiveness of the technology applied in transforming livestock waste into organic high-value commercial fertilizers (such as Struvite)
- Promotion of increased knowledge among stakeholders regarding the types/quantities of inorganic wastes produced in each value chain

CALL TO ACTION

Collectively, the Interreg MED Green Growth community contributes to enhancing the efficiency in the use of a variety of key resources such as land, energy, water, plastics, fuel and other materials.

In order to reach the full potential of the presented solutions throughout the Mediterranean region, the Interreg MED Green Growth community calls for action in the following aspects:

The European Commission and EU Member States

- Funds and subsidies be made available for proper waste management as the first step towards value chains restructuring and adapting to greener practices in the Agro-Food industry.

Regional and local authorities in the Mediterranean

- Effective policies aimed at achieving real progress towards a circular economy.

- To gather data on KPIs (Key Performance indicator) as a result of the pilot actions carried out in production and industry companies, to estimate the willingness of the companies to restructure their production process to greener production in order to reduce inorganic waste.
- To modify the current set of EU circular economy indicators to include Agro-Food sector indicators on organic and inorganic waste.

SMEs

- To know and have available innovative solutions at sustainable costs in order to prevent the production of inorganic waste.
- It is necessary to have a network of widespread and efficient recovery plants that can make the recycling of inorganic waste advantageous from an environmental and economic point of view.
- To ensure that the use of recycled material is safe and convenient compared to the use of raw materials.

European Commission (2015). *Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy*
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52015DC0614>

European Commission (2018). *Monitoring framework for the circular economy.*
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1516265440535&uri=COM:2018:29:FIN>

European Commission (2019). *Sustainable Products in a Circular Economy Towards an EU Product Policy Framework contributing to the Circular Economy*
https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-2409307_en

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