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CORE

Project presentation

Last update on: March 2026



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CORE objective

Composting in Rural Environments?

CORE is a project co-funded by Interreg Europe. It focuses on the promotion and mainstreaming of composting and anaerobic digestion, in rural areas across Europe. The presentation of good practices for the prevention and recycling of bio-waste from eight European countries will facilitate the improvement of policy instruments for the treatment of source-separated and separately collected bio-waste, as well as their sustainable utilisation. The project is expected to serve as a catalyst for rural territories to improve biowaste management and curtail the practice of landfilling or incinerating biowaste to a considerable extent.



CORE partnership

9 project partners from 8 regions working together:

- **RSUSA – Waste Management Castilla La Mancha (ES) – lead partner**
- LfU – State Office of Environment Brandenburg (DE)
- Vlaco – Flemish Compost and Digestate Organization (BE)
- Swietokrzyskie Region - Marshal Office of Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship (PL)
- KDRIU - Central Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency Nonprofit Ltd (HUN)
- Autonomous Province of Bolzano - Alto Adige. Environmental and Climate Protection Agency. Waste Management Office (IT)
- Municipality of Söderhamm (SE)
- CLuBE – Cluster of Bioeconomy and Environment of Western Macedonia (GR)
- ECN - European Compost Network (DE) – advisory partner



● Lead partner

● Project partners

CORE partnership

Seven policy instruments:

- **Spain:** Castilla-La Mancha's Circular Economy Strategy 2030 (EEC CLM 2030)
- **Germany:** Waste Management Plan of Brandenburg
- **Belgium:** Flemish Action Plan "Circular Food Loss and Biomass (residual) Flows 2012-2025"
- **Poland:** European Funds for Świętokrzyskie Region 2021 – 2027
- **Hungary:** Balaton Priority Area Development Programme 2021-2027
- **Italy:** Waste Management Plan 2000 – 4th update valid for the 2021-2030 period
- **Sweden:** Cycle Plan 2021-2025



CORE key outputs



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19 in Good practice database



100%
of initially
planned



100%
of initially
planned

Key Outputs:

RSUSA (Spain)

Interreg Database: **Spain** Good Practices



Several best practices have been presented during thematic seminars, and Interreg has selected a number of them for inclusion in its official best practices database:

1. **Smart Composting for Efficient Biowaste Management.**
2. **Domestic and Community Vermicomposting.**
3. **Guide for Community and Home Composting in Castilla – La Mancha.**

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Key Results: Influence of Knowledge Exchange



The development of the good practice ***Guide for Community and Home Composting in Castilla-La Mancha*** has been strongly influenced by the knowledge and experiences gained through thematic seminars and technical visits organised by **VLACO and the Autonomous Province of Bolzano**.

These exchanges provided valuable insights, practical approaches, and tested methodologies that have been integrated into the design and implementation of the guide



Key Results: Influence of Knowledge Exchange



Gaining insight into the **Compost Master model in Flanders**—through the experience of VLACO—has also been of key importance. This reference has supported the modernisation of a comparable role in Spain, where training is delivered by our stakeholder Composta en Red.

Originally inspired by this model in 2003, *Composta en Red* has since played a central role in advancing this professional profile. In addition, ongoing efforts are focused on achieving formal recognition of this **training within the official catalogue of occupations** of the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy, contributing to the professionalisation of the sector.

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Policy improvement Integrating Composting into Regional Strategies of **Castilla – La Mancha (Spain)**



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Ongoing efforts are focused on ensuring that the Castilla-La Mancha Circular Economy Strategy 2030 (EEC CLM 2030) incorporates the ***Guide for Community and Home Composting in Castilla-La Mancha*** as a key educational tool to support biowaste management through composting across the region, which has a population of approximately 2.12 million inhabitants.

In parallel, work is underway to update the statutes of the RSU Consortium to formally include the organic fraction, which is currently not addressed in this framework. This update would have a direct impact on 92 municipalities and around 360,000 inhabitants, strengthening the institutional basis for separate biowaste collection and management.

Benefits in Ciudad Real thanks to the **CORE Project**



“The CORE Project has enabled us to learn from and exchange knowledge on organic waste management in rural areas across Europe, and to transfer these insights to our own area of influence. This has contributed to improving both the economic and environmental efficiency of our management practices, while also strengthening the skills and expertise of the RSUSA team.”

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Ignacio Aguilar Pastor
Technical Manager
Lead Partner RSUSA
Ciudad Real (Spain)

Key Outputs:

Lfu - State Office of Environment
Brandenburg (Germany)

Key Results: Influence of Knowledge Exchange

Inspired by the public relation campaigns and informational materials produced by CORE partners, particularly VLACO from Belgium, the LfU developed a brochure on home composting, which was distributed at several events where the LfU participated and presented CORE. A general brochure on food waste is currently in the works.



Das darf in die **Biotonne**, nicht auf den Kompost:

- verarbeitete Lebensmittelabfälle, z.B. gekochte Essensreste, Brot, Milchprodukte, Öle und Fette
- verdorbene Produkte
- tierische Erzeugnisse (z.B. rohes Fleisch und Fisch)
- Unkräuter (z.B. Ackerwinde oder Giersch)
- Neophyten (z.B. Goldrute)
- schwer kompostierbare Pflanzenteile oder grobes Holz
- kranke Pflanzen



Gewusst warum:
Auf dem eigenen Kompost können nicht alle Bioabfälle entsorgt werden. Denn, um Keime und Pflanzensamen sicher abzutöten, muss im Inneren eine bestimmte Mindesttemperatur herrschen. Dies kann man auf dem eigenen Kompost nur schwer sicherstellen. Daher sollten einige Bioabfälle über die **Biotonne** entsorgt werden und in Kompost- oder Vergärungsanlagen verbracht werden. Hier wird der Bioabfall hygienisiert. Die hierfür notwendigen Temperaturen sind gesetzlich vorgegeben und werden streng kontrolliert.



Vorteil: Bioabfälle aus der Biotonne werden hochwertig genutzt, aus ihnen entsteht Energie oder Kompost. Landen Sie im Restmüll werden verbrannt und wertvolle Nährstoffe und Energiepotenzial gehen verloren.

Folgen Sie uns

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Composting in Rural Environments

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LfU
Landesamt für Umwelt

Kompost und Biotonne - Ein starkes Team im eigenen Garten

Key Results: Influence of Knowledge Exchange



Public relations work and networking

One key finding from the project is the importance of public relations. The LfU is working on various communication channels. For example, the LfU is in contact with the Brandenburg Garden and Horticulture Exhibition to present the topic of home composting at these events. In addition, the LfU is developing methods to engage specific target groups such as allotment associations or schools. The network of stakeholders established as part of the project is helping in this regard.

Inspiration from:

Study visit and good practices presented from VLACO, Belgium and KDRIU, Hungary

Policy improvement in Brandenburg, Germany



REC4EU

Strategy on biowaste management of Brandenburg

The LfU and the Ministry of the Environment (MLEUV) have incorporated the best practices identified during the project into a strategy paper aimed at improving biowaste management. The main objectives are:

- Expand door-to-door collection and increase the volume of biowaste collected.
- Inform residents about proper waste sorting to improve the quality of biowaste.
- Further improve the technical infrastructure to increase both volume and quality.
- Inform residents about high-quality home composting.
- Improve networking among stakeholders.

Policy improvement in Brandenburg, Germany



LFU
Landesamt für Umwelt

Ministerium für Land- und Ernährungswirtschaft, Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz

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REC4EU

Strategy on biowaste management of Brandenburg

The LfU and the Ministry of the Environment (MLEUV) have incorporated the best practices identified during the project into a strategy paper aimed at improving biowaste management. The main objectives are:

- Optimizing the fee structure for waste separation to encourage the separation of biowaste.
- Introducing mandatory sorting analyses of residual waste to evaluate the impact of the strategy paper and the improvement of biowaste management, and to update Brandenburg's waste management plan.

Inspiration from: Study visits and good practices presented from VLACO, Belgium, Municipality of Söderhamn, Sweden and Autonomous Province of Bolzano, Italy

Policy improvement in Brandenburg, Germany



Strategy on biowaste management of Brandenburg

One of the consequences of the repeated emphasis on the importance of bio waste separation and door-to-door collection for achieving the bio waste management goals outlined in the strategy paper and the waste management plan is that one of the two remaining municipal waste authorities that do not yet offer door-to-door collection plans to introduce it, likely in early 2028.

Key Outputs: Vlaco (Belgium)

Key Results and communications in **Flanders**

Brought several Good Practices to Thematic Seminars & EU CORE-website:

1. Implementing a home and neighbourhood composting scheme, with the help of volunteers (master composters),
2. Implementing professional composting: professional vegetable-fruit-garden (vfg)-waste pre-digestion and composting,
3. Prevention of biowaste is non-stop communication about more than waste avoidance or home composting ,
4. Regulations Governing Composting in Rural Areas,
5. Retraining 'Master Composters' to become 'Closed Loop Garden Management Advisors,
6. Succesfull marketing of compost and digestate,
7. Good and different use of compost and digestate-based products starts with a good plan (OVAM)
8. Pocketbook on Closed loop gardening.
9. Online survey and "Screening of Closed Loop Behavior" in Flanders



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Key Results and communications in Flanders

Wormeries and organism info in Vlaco's Pocketbook

- Info on wormeries (RSUSA) cfr GP 'Community & Domestic Vermicomposting' - RSUSA (TS3)




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Community & Domestic Vermicomposting

Mario Toribio
Composting Technician
mario.toribio@rsuciudadreal.es

14 - 16 May 2024 | Flanders



Description

There are two cases where worms can be used to do composting:

1. **DOMESTIC:** Focus on people/families who live in apartments with terraces or patios. Also, like a didactic tool to do environmental education in schools.
2. **COMMUNITY:** When the biowaste is from vegetal composition (leaves, fruit & vegetables peels and even manure).

Vermicomposting can be scaled depending on the available space, the limit is set by yourself.



(1)



(2)

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- Info taken up into Vlaco's new publication (2025) 'Zakboek voor de Kringlooptuin' (cfr GP Vlaco TS5)



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Key Results and communications in Flanders

Tutorial videos on selective retrieval VFG-waste, professional composting, and home composting incl via Closed Loop Garden Mgt Advisors

- tutorial videos were developed & disseminated ('local action') by Vlaco as part of the CORE project to encourage target groups to compost at home and close organic cycles in an accessible and pure way - <https://vlaco.be/informatievideo-s-in-kader-van-core-project>
 - Home composting (Dutch | English)
 - Closed loop garden management advisors (Dutch | English)
 - Selective collection and professional processing of VGF waste (Dutch | English)



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Policy improvement in Flanders

Flemish Action Plan “Circular Food Loss and Biomass (residual) Flows 2012-2025

- New version 2026 or 2027
- 2/2025: CORE ‘lessons learned’ until then by Vlaco → OVAM → included in the Progress Report (4/2025) of the Action Plan (~= uptake in final new Action Plan) i.c.:
 - AP – Ch. 1.7: extra section § 8.2: ‘Stimulating Home Cycling’: concepts promoted via video-tutorials (CORE/Dutch & English (subtitled))
 - AP – Ch. 1.9: extra section § 10.2: ‘Increasing circularity and sustainability of the recycling market’: concepts/importance of good sorting behaviour VFG-waste promoted via video-tutorials (CORE/Dutch & English (subtitled))



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Policy improvement in Flanders

Flemish Action Plan “Circular Food Loss and Biomass (residual) Flows 2012-2025

- 3/2026: further CORE ‘lessons learned’ and planned action added in the Progress Report (3/2026) of the Action Plan (~= uptake in final new Action Plan) i.c.:
 - AP – Ch. 1.9: indicator AP 1.9:

*‘At the end of 2025, Vlaco launched a pilot **social media challenge** in collaboration with waste intermunicipality Ibogem, focusing on reducing food waste. In januari - february 2026 a 2nd pilot social media challenge was successfully finalized with the waste intermunicipality VERKO, focusing on the collection of clean organic (vfg-)waste. Through both campaigns inspired by the Interreg CORE-project, households in both intermunicipal regions are being made aware of the issue and challenged to reduce food waste and sort their waste more effectively, with the aim of collecting more, and above all, cleaner organic (vfg-)waste. These campaigns will be evaluated in the course of 2026 and will form the basis for a toolkit of challenges and the set-up of more social media challenges with Vlaco-intermunicipal members Flanders.’*



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Example of a Pilot Action inspired by Flanders



Vlaco inspired and has started as 'donor' to advise and co-monitor activities in CORE's 2 pilots (2025-2026)

- **Locally composting the digestate from anaerobic digestion** (Bolzano, Italy)
- **Small-scale neighbourhood composting sites in Söderhamn to increase composting of garden waste** (Söderhamn, Sweden)

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CORE Benefits Regions



"CORE offers a reference for one's own region's strengths and weaknesses and it therefore inspires for future steps."

"Even in a fairly densely populated region as Flanders large and small scale solutions to closing nutrient and organic matter loops are important. In both scales the information and communication should be run via an array of individual info, community-forming event, informal and official channels"

Christophe Boogaerts
Project officer | Vlaco
Flanders (Belgium)

Key Outputs:

Świętokrzyskie Region (POLAND)

Policy improvement in Świętokrzyskie Region, Poland (1 policy instrument)

Policy Instrument: Waste Management Plan for the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship 2023-2028 (WPGO)

Key Update: Officially accepted by the Regional Council on October 26, 2023.

Main Achievement: Integration of specific provisions for bio-waste management infrastructure development, including biogas and biomethane plants.

Goal: To maximize raw material and energy recovery from bio-waste through innovative processing technologies.

Influence: The changes are a direct result of exchanging experiences and learning about good practices during CORE study visits to Spain and Italy.

Policy improvement in Świętokrzyskie Region, Poland (II policy instrument)

Policy Instrument: European Funds for Świętokrzyskie Region 2021-2027 (EFSR)

Educational Reform: Recommendation to update "Education on circular economy" measures to specifically include international good practices learned during the CORE project.

Funding Allocation for Circular Economy (Objective 2.6):

Action 2.7 (Waste Management - Grants): EUR 10.5 million.

Action 2.8 (Waste Management - Financial Instruments): EUR 5 million.

Timeline: The proposal was submitted to the European Commission on March 31, 2025, with a final decision in August 2025.



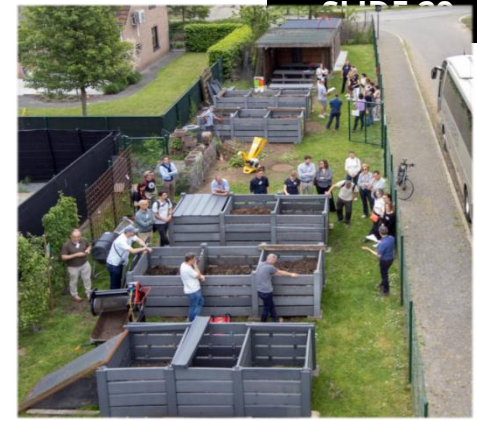
Inspiration from CORE Partners

Knowledge Exchange & Good Practices:

Anaerobic Digestion Systems: Inspired by technologies from Germany (Schwarze Elster), Italy (Province of Bolzano/Lana), Sweden, and Belgium (Flanders).

Educational Measures: Adopting approaches from:

- ✓ **Vlaco (Belgium):** "Prevention of Organic Waste - Non-stop communication".
- ✓ **Province of Bolzano (Italy):** Promoting compost as soil conditioners for home gardens.
- ✓ **CTRIA (Hungary):** Experiences from the "Compost Festival".



BENEFITS FOR THE ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKIE REGION

- ✓ **Strategic Planning:** The Investment Plan annexed to the WPGO now explicitly indicates the need for biodegradable waste digestion facilities.
- ✓ **Capacity Building:** Enhanced cooperation between the Section for Economic Cooperation and the ROP management team to implement circular economy goals.
- ✓ **Cross-Regional Synergy:** Implementation of a "Learning by Doing" approach by transferring tested European bio-waste solutions to the regional level.
- ✓ **Sustainability:** Strengthening the regional transition towards a resource-efficient economy through targeted financial support and updated policy frameworks.

Key Outputs:

KDRIU - Central Transdanubian
Regional Innovation Agency
Nonprofit Ltd (Hungary)

Policy improvement in Hungary

Balaton Priority Area Development Programme 2021-2027

1. Community composting sites installed in Veszprém
2. Revision of the Sustainability Guide
3. Grant scheme modification
4. Sustainability scoring system update
5. Implementation started through newly launched funding scheme (2025)



Inspiration from:

Thematic Seminar and Study Visit in Spain; Community composting in El Robledo (April 2023); Partner: RSUSA

Thematic Seminar and Study Visit in Flanders; Neighbourhood Composting Site (Compostjen) in Lokeren in Belgian; (May 2024); Partner: VLACO

Key results and communication in Hungary



- Development of comprehensive **educational materials** on community composting;
- Creation and wide distribution of a **public awareness brochure**;
- Launch of a dedicated **project website / landing page** (komposztaljvelunk.hu);
- Installation of **information boards** to support proper composting practices;
- Organisation of **dissemination events** (workshops, presentations, community engagement);
- Active **promotion of the CORE project** via local media and social platforms;

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Key Outputs:

Autonomous Province of Bolzano -
Alto Adige. Environmental and
Climate Protection Agency. Waste
Management Office (Italy)

Pilot action (Province of Bolzano)

Turning Digestate from Anaerobic Digestion into Local Compost—An Alternative to Out-of-Province Waste Disposal in Bolzano



In South Tyrol, digestate from anaerobic digestion—previously transported outside the region—is now being tested for **local composting**, reducing costs and emissions.

This pilot aims to co-compost digestate with **green waste** (e.g. grass clippings) in a nearby **indoor facility**, enabling better odour control and emissions filtering. **Several digestate/greenwaste mixtures** will be tested.

The trial explores furthermore combining digestate with other local residues (e.g. **pomace, fruit-processing waste, diatomaceous earth**) to identify scalable solutions for multiple organic waste streams.

The pilot includes **regular sampling and lab analyses** to define a **replicable compost quality protocol**, aligned with EU standards.

It was inspired by a **study visit in Flanders**, where a similar model was observed. Technical support is provided by **VLACO (Belgium)** and **ECN (Germany)**.

Results will inform the **new Waste Management Plan** of Bolzano (2026), ensuring policy integration and long-term impact.

The total cost of the pilot is around **EUR 129,000**.

Policy improvement in Italy

Waste Management Plan 2000 - 4th update (2021-2030)

Decentralized Green Waste Composting

✂ Activities Implemented

- 2 concrete-box sites equipped in Taufers and Mazia (May 2023 – Oct 2024)
- Illegal waste removed and hill reshaped in Taufers

🏠 Funding & Setup

- €80,000 mobilized (public municipal funds)
- No heavy infrastructure: reused public parking, no landscape alteration

📊 Operation & Management

- Managed by municipalities with staff on site
- Citizens can deliver green waste during opening hours
- Material quality and quantity are recorded

🏠 Community Engagement & Impact

- Info events raised awareness on legal green waste disposal
- Model inspired by CORE best practices, flexible and replicable
- Lower costs than managing illegal green waste piles

Inspiration from:

Thematic Seminar and Study Visit in Flanders; SV Compostwerf Sint Niklaas (May 2024); Partner: VLACO



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Policy improvement in Italy

Waste Management Plan 2000 - 4th update (2021-2030)

Awareness campaigns on organic waste

✂ Activities Implemented

- Open-door events: biogas plant and composting plant
- Video interviews and brochure on composting available online
- Infographic video (short & long versions) widely disseminated
- School Day on Food Waste
- Conference on Consuming strategies

🇪🇺 Funding & Setup

- €18,400 mobilized by Autonomous Province of Bolzano
- 5,000 compost paper bags printed & distributed
- Campaign for video diffusion on cinema/social media/online/bus/train

📊 Operation & Management

- Target: Citizens >25 and students >12
- Replicable events & materials inspired by CORE study visits

🔔 Community Engagement & Impact

- 400 students involved in School Day on Food Waste
- 30 visitors at Digester Open Day
- Short video reached over 135,000 views

Inspiration from:

Thematic Seminar and Study Visit in Flanders; SV Compostwerf Sint Niklaas (May 2024); Partner: VLACO



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Policy improvement in Italy

Waste Management Plan 2000 - 4th update (2021-2030)

Food Waste Calculation Tool

✂ Activities Implemented

- Methodology for quantifying food waste developed.
- Electronic tool currently under development
- Two meetings of the Provincial Food Waste Working Group to define parameters & data.



Funding & Setup

- Electronic calculation tool by University of Vienna, financed with provincial funds.



Operation & Management

- Task force activated (Chamber of Commerce, ASTAT, trade associations, provincial departments). Supports data collection and methodology testing.



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Inspiration from:

Initial thematic analysis identifying areas for improvement and development.

Key Outputs:

Municipality of Söderhamn (Sweden)

Example of a **pilot action**



Small-scale neighborhood composting

This pilot action is being carried out by Söderhamn Municipality in collaboration with committed volunteers, and with the Belgian partner Vlaco as donor partner. The aim is to test small-scale composting of garden waste in residential areas, and different types of composting.

The inspiration comes mainly from study visits in Belgium and Spanish partners.

The pilot period is **1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026** and the budget is around **EUR 50,000**.

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Policy improvement in Sweden

Söderhamn Municipalitys' Cycle Plan

- The Cycle Plan is under revision and the aim is to include a new section on garden waste management.
 - Suggestions for management and measures will be presented
 - Aim to reduce the burning of garden waste
 - Measures to avoid problems with pests and invasive species
 - Possible resource allocation to work more actively with garden waste



Policy improvement in Sweden

Soil production



Our stakeholder Ekogas has, through the CORE project, focused more on our solid digestate. The problem with it has been, and is, that it contains plastic. Now they have decided to take small steps, rather than trying to solve the whole problem at once. This means that they will concentrate on a small part of our digestate and use it as a nutrient in garden soil in collaboration with a local soil manufacturer with the aim of using the garden soil, packaged in bags, as an educational symbol that food waste becomes not only biogas but also soil. The bags of soil will then be offered to citizens.

Key Outputs:

CluBE-Region of Western Macedonia
(Greece)

Policy improvement in Greece



Within the framework of the CORE project, CluBE aimed to integrate composting into the Western Macedonia Regional Waste Management Plan (RWMP- ΠΕΣΔΑ) and ensured that this is specifically reflected in the revised plan. DIADYMA S.A. (Waste Management Company of Western Macedonia, Greece) is responsible for the design, implementation, and monitoring of the RWMP in the region of Western Macedonia. Following the influence of the CORE project, the revised RWMP now includes composting and is pending formal approval.

Specifically:

- ❑ The collected materials will be directed to the pre-sorted biowaste treatment line, from which high-quality compost will be produced after aerobic treatment.

Policy improvement in **Greece**



- ❑ Additionally, household composting will be promoted providing the appropriate equipment. Large producers will have the option to use mechanical composters.
- ❑ Kitchen waste (food waste) and green waste (especially from gardens and parks) will be collected separately using various methods, including:
 - Special bins (brown bins) for households.
 - Food service enterprises, according to the provisions of Law 4685/2020, are obliged to collect waste separately regardless of capacity, such as restaurants, catering services, camps, hotels.

Policy improvement in Greece



Similarly, grocery stores, fruit and vegetable shops, and local markets are included.

- A separate collection network for green waste.

Edible fats and oils, which also fall under the category of biowaste, will be collected separately and directed towards biofuel production for energy recovery or other applications.

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 **CluBE**
Cluster of Bioeconomy & Environment
of Western Macedonia

Learn more about CORE

Key links

- Project website: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/core-0>
- Project videos: <http://www.youtube.com/@COREinterreg>
- Good Practices: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/core-0/good-practices?page=0>

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