CirBioWaste | Interreg Euro-MED | Co-funded by the European Union

CirBioWaste Newsletter

October 2025 – March 2026

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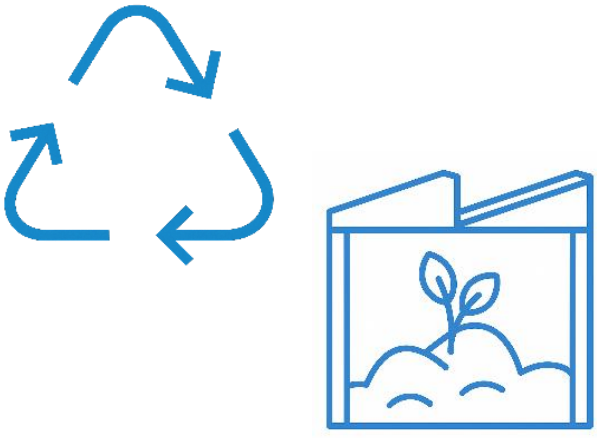

Fostering innovative and sustainable bio-waste management and circular bio-economy in the Mediterranean area

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About the project

The [CirBioWaste project (Fostering innovative and sustainable bio-waste management and circular bio-economy in the Mediterranean area)] aims to support the improvement of environmental resilience and foster the transition to an efficient and circular bioeconomy in the Euro-MED area. The project promotes the implementation of sustainable bio-waste management to reduce environmental impact and create social and economic benefits in the Euro-MED area.

CirBioWaste is transferring existing innovative and validated solutions for sustainable bio-waste management, adapted to different contexts. Strategies and action plans, including policy recommendations and practical guidelines to deploy proposed solutions, are jointly created with and for the targeted entities (and related key local stakeholders).

This project aims to tackle the challenges identified across partner experience and different EU projects, on the fulfilment of the obligation of member states to separately collect and recycle the municipal biowaste and meet the EU-related targets. The project is reaching this goal by supporting the public administrations in the Euro-MED area in the implementation of existing innovative bio-waste management solutions adapted to their local context.

The activities of the project are related to fostering awareness to ensure proper quality of the bio-waste separated at source and proper use of the recycled products.

The work plan of the project consists of 3 Work Packages (WP). These are:

- WP 1: Support the implementation of strategies and action plans to improve bio-waste management.
- WP 2: Sharing knowledge and raising awareness by providing supporting tools and capacity building.
- WP 3: Dissemination and capitalisation of project outputs to achieve the widest impact in the EU MED area.

As a result, CirBioWaste is creating a transnational and collaborative space among the 10 Euro-MED local territories, project partners, and associates where to jointly assess, design, and implement, together with local stakeholders, the best technical solutions (and complementary instruments) to be adopted.

The project is co-funded by the Interreg Euro-MED Programme and has a duration of 27 months, from April 2025 to July 2027.

Total budget	Project duration	Interreg Funds
€ 1.381.630,50	27 months	€ 1.105.304,40

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FIRST ONLINE TRAINING ON BIO-WASTE MANAGEMENT

CirBioWaste launches its First Online Training on Bio-waste Management

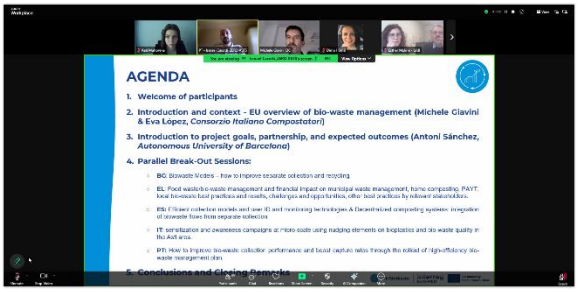
The First Online Training: "Models for an Efficient Bio-Waste Management at EU and Local Level", was organised on the 16th of January 2026. The event marked the start of the project's training activities, aimed at sharing knowledge on bio-waste management and supporting the circular bio-economy in the Mediterranean region.

Date: 16th January 2026
Location: Online

The online meeting gathered more than 100 participants, including municipal representatives, waste management professionals, project partners, and key stakeholders from several Mediterranean countries. The training provided a platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and the exchange of practical experience related to innovative approaches in bio-waste management.

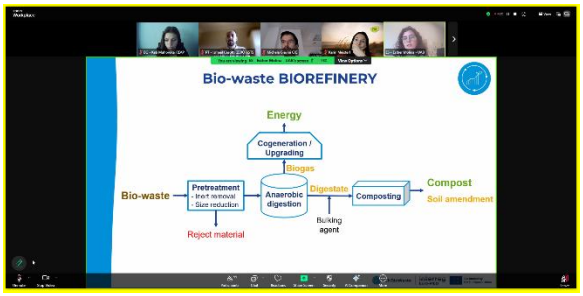
The event opened with an introduction outlining the objectives of the training and the broader vision of the CirBioWaste project. Participants discussed the growing importance of bio-waste as a valuable resource and its contribution to environmental protection, climate goals, and local circular economy strategies.

A dedicated session presented the European policy framework for bio-waste management, highlighting current regulations, implementation challenges, and opportunities for improving collection, treatment, and recovery systems across Member States. The session offered participants a clear overview of how EU policies support the transition towards more sustainable waste management models.



The local case studies supported by the project CirBioWaste were then introduced in detail, including their partnership structure and expected outcomes.

An important part of the training consisted of parallel breakout sessions, organised in the partners' national languages. These interactive discussions allowed participants to share local perspectives, successful practices, and lessons learned in different territorial contexts.



The Bulgarian session focused on practical solutions such as separate collection systems for garden and green waste, digital tools supporting citizen engagement, incentive-based initiatives, and sustainable circular economy business models.

The Greek session addressed the financial impact of bio-waste management on municipal waste management, as well as local best practices and their experiences.

The Spanish session focused on efficient collection models for bio-waste, user ID and monitoring technologies and the integration of bio-waste flows in decentralised composting systems.

The Italian session discussed awareness campaigns at the micro-scale to deep in the impact of bio-waste quality.

Finally, the Portuguese session focused on high-efficient management plans to boost capture rates and increase collection figures.

The training concluded with a wrap-up session summarising the main insights and identifying key next steps for the project. Participants highlighted the value of cross-border cooperation and continuous knowledge exchange as essential drivers for improving bio-waste management and advancing circular bio-economy practices.

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"TAKERS" IN THE CIRBIOWASTE PROJECT

Bratsigovo Municipality – the Bulgarian case study

Bratsigovo Municipality is officially presented as one of the so-called "taker" territories within the CirBioWaste project.

Bratsigovo Municipality is located in Pazardzhik Province, Bulgaria, at the foothills of the Western Rhodopes, and comprises seven settlements with a total population of approximately 9,000 residents according to the latest official census data. Its territory is characterised by a mixed socio-economic environment, combining small urban and rural communities, agricultural activities, and traditional livelihood. Alongside challenges typical of rural areas, such as limited infrastructure, migration of younger populations, and the need for sustainable waste management solutions aligned with regional and national policies, the municipality also possesses real potential for the introduction of effective and practical practices.

The availability of significant rural resources, as well as the relatively compact distribution of the population, creates favourable conditions for the implementation of innovative and sustainable solutions in the management of biodegradable waste.

Through its participation as a "taker" in the CirBioWaste project, Bratsigovo Municipality will have the opportunity to adapt already developed and tested models for sustainable biodegradable waste management, improve local infrastructure, and actively encourage citizen participation in the transition towards a circular economy.

Asti Province – the Italian case study

The Province of Asti has been officially selected as one of the case study territories within the CirBioWaste Project.

Located in Piedmont, northern Italy, Asti Province is a territory celebrated for its rolling hills, picturesque vineyards, and charming historic villages. It comprises 117 municipalities and is home to approximately 215,000 inhabitants. The province is internationally recognised for its wine production - grape cultivation alone accounts for 18% of the territory - and for its rich culinary traditions, making it a popular destination for rural tourism.

Waste management in Asti is coordinated by a public consortium established in 2005 and jointly managed by the municipalities. Almost all municipalities in the province have implemented source-separated biowaste collection schemes, while only a small fraction - around 4% - consists of isolated communities that rely on home composting. The average food waste capture rate in the province is approximately 75 kilograms per person per year, which is slightly below the national average of 90 kilograms recorded in Italy in 2023.

Collection systems vary across the territory. About 30% of municipalities use door-to-door collection for food waste, while the majority rely on road containers, sometimes combined with door-to-door services. Once collected, biowaste is processed in a local integrated recycling facility that combines anaerobic digestion with composting, ensuring that organic waste is transformed into valuable compost.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. The province aims to increase the food waste capture rate and improve the quality of collected material, particularly in municipalities where road container systems lead to higher contamination levels. To address these issues, the CirBioWaste project will implement two key strategies. The first involves launching interactive awareness campaigns targeting micro-communities, with the ability to measure their impact. The second focuses on working closely with local authorities to incorporate specific quality-improvement measures into upcoming tenders for waste collection services, ensuring long-term progress.

Municipalities of Central Alentejo (AMCAL – Associação de Municípios do Alentejo Central) – the Portuguese case study

AMCAL – *Associação de Municípios do Alentejo Central* (Association of Municipalities of Central Alentejo) is an association of municipalities in Portugal with a very direct operational role in waste management and, in particular, in the separate collection and recovery of bio-waste. This profile fits the type of target entities with a view to improving the collection and recycling of bio-waste and accelerating the transition to a circular bioeconomy.

AMCAL's area of intervention covers five municipalities — Alvito, Cuba, Portel, Viana do Alentejo and Vidigueira — spread across the districts of Beja and Évora, totalling 21 parishes, 22,895 inhabitants and 1,749 km² (about 13 inhabitants/km²), a markedly rural and low-density context. The association was founded in 1991 and it is active in several areas (cartography, sanitation, metrology, tourism and culture), with waste management remaining one of its core activities.

In the field of waste management, AMCAL operates and integrates a set of infrastructures and equipment that support 'upstream' management: the Vila Ruiva intermunicipal landfill, the sorting centre for both mixed waste and recyclables park in Vila Ruiva, eco-centres in the five municipalities, transfer stations and a fleet dedicated to collection and transport, complemented by a network of recycling points. This system puts AMCAL in a particularly relevant position to reinforce separation at source and increase bio-waste capture rates, reducing landfill disposal.

A recent milestone is the opening of Organic Recovery Centre (CVO) dedicated to the stabilisation of bio-waste from mixed waste, as well as to the treatment of upcoming stream of selectively collected door-to-door bio-waste, installed at the Vila Ruiva/Cuba Intermunicipal Landfill. The project was supported by EU funds (POSEUR) and IT was announced with an investment of around €9 million, with an indicated annual capacity of around 10,000 tonnes and an estimated production of 2,500 tonnes/year of compost, receiving bio-waste from the five municipalities of AMCAL.

As a "taker", AMCAL will benefit from a result-oriented approach: joint diagnosis, design of strategies and action plans, and consolidation of practical tools (including training and awareness-raising) to improve the quality of bio-waste separated at source and the efficiency of the system. By combining local treatment infrastructure with collection measures and community involvement, AMCAL can strengthen local circularity — returning compost to the territory and reducing dependence on landfill — while contributing to demonstrating replicable models in rural areas of the Mediterranean.

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Cerdanyola del Vallés – the Catalan case study

The Municipality of Cerdanyola del Vallès participates in the CirbioWaste Project as one of the case study territories.

Located in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, Cerdanyola del Vallès is a dynamic municipality with approximately 58,300 inhabitants. The territory is also home to the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), one of the largest academic campuses in Spain, with around 43,500 daily users including students, staff, and researchers. This unique combination of residential areas, commercial activity, and a major institutional hub makes Cerdanyola a particularly interesting case study for addressing complex waste management challenges.

Bio-waste collection in Cerdanyola began in the early 2000s and currently covers 100% of the population. Today, 39.2% of municipal solid waste is collected separately, with bio-waste, both food and green waste, representing 37% of the separately collected fraction. This corresponds to an average capture rate of approximately 52 kilograms of food waste per capita per year. The current collection system is mainly based on open road containers across the municipality, while door-to-door collection is implemented only in a specific neighborhood (Bellaterra).

Despite its long-standing experience in bio-waste collection, Cerdanyola faces important challenges. The quantity of the collected bio-waste has not increased in the past 10 years, and the quality remains a challenge, with impurity levels of around 15%. The CirBioWaste project will work closely with local authorities to incorporate specific quality-improvement measures into upcoming contracts with waste collection services, and reinforce communication actions, ensuring long-term progress. In addition, the project will address the need to improve collection schemes for commercial waste streams by proposing tailored solutions for singular large generators (based on door-to-door collection services).

The project will also focus on the **Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB),** as a major bio-waste generator from multiple canteens, green areas, a student dorm and day-to-day campus life. Over recent years, the UAB has made

continuous efforts to advance sustainability and circular economy practices across the campus. In this context, CircuLab, the university's open innovation laboratory on circular economy and waste valorisation, plays a key role as a testing and demonstration space. CircuLab supports initiatives focused on prevention, reuse and recycling, while actively engaging students, staff and external stakeholders. Building on this experience, and in line with the Cerdanyola's waste collection improvements, the project will also support in the evaluation of adapted bio-waste collection schemes for the UAB, including solutions based on locked bring collection points. The improved bio-waste practices in such an academic setting have strong educational and replicability potential beyond the campus.

Municipality of Marathon – the Greek case study

The Municipality of Marathon is an associated partner, a "taker territory" of the CirBioWaste project.

The Municipality of Marathon, in the Region of Attica, includes the municipal units of Marathon, Nea Makri, Varnavas and Grammatiko. It is the 5th largest municipality in Attica by area (226.55 km²) and has a population of 31,331 residents, with its seat in Marathon. The total population is estimated to almost double during the summer, as the municipality's extensive coastal area is a popular holiday destination in Eastern Attica, but also due to the high number of visitors to the archaeological site.

The municipality's territory includes protected sites within the Natura 2000 network, such as the Schinias Marathon National Park (Natura 2000 site code GR3000003), one of the most important ecosystems in Attica. The municipality has a semi-urban character, combining coastal and semi-mountainous areas, and its economic activity is mainly linked to agriculture and tourism.

Marathon also has a distinctive historic identity associated with the Battle of Marathon and the origin narrative of the marathon race, with the modern Athens Marathon recognised as the original marathon course and used as the marathon route in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens.

Through its participation as a "taker" in the CirBioWaste project, the Municipality of Marathon will be able to adapt practical, already-tested approaches for biodegradable waste management to its local conditions, strengthen the operation of separate collection systems (especially for food waste), and reinforce citizen participation through structured awareness actions, supporting the municipality's shift towards circular economy practices.

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CirBioWaste Partnerships and communication channels

The project includes a well-balanced mixture of partners coming from several main sectors: public authorities (local, regional and national), research institutions, NGOs, and environmental agencies. Together, we represent varied views across a range of stakeholders and interests, providing competent knowledge and experience in the field of circular economy, bio waste management, and policy design. The partnership is characterized by a strong transnational character, covering five nations and six institutions within the Interreg Euro-Mediterranean area, thus ensuring a good geographical and cultural coverage and relevant attention to the issues and needs of a wide range of institutional settings and establishments from European Countries.

Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB)- **Lead partner**, Spain	UAB Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona	https://www.uab.cat
ENT FOUNDATION (FUNDACIO ENT), Spain	FUNDACIÓ ent	https://ent.cat
Consorzio Italiano Compostatori (CIC), Italy	CONSORZIO ITALIANO COMPOSTATORI	https://www.compost.it
ZERO - Association for the Sustainability of the Earth System (ZERO), Portugal	zero.	https://zero.ong
Ecological Recycling Society (Ecorec), Greece		https://ecorec.gr
Regional Energy Agency of Pazardjik (REAP), Bulgaria	REGIONAL ENERGY AGENCY - PAZARDJIK	https://reap-bg.eu

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EDITORIAL

For every info or updates about the newsletter please contact:

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