

# WASTEWISE project



## Policy recommendations

edited by  
**AAEL & CoPE**

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## Introduction

Based on the *Comparative Analysis of Waste Management Systems in Slovakia and Sicily: Challenges, Approaches, and EU Policy Implementation* ([link](#)), conducted within the Erasmus+ KA210-VET project Waste Wise: Enhancing Governance for Sustainable Waste Management (No. 2024-2-SK01-KA210-VET-000260945), the partner institutions formulated a set of recommendations to enhance the efficiency, sustainability, and governance of waste management systems in the participating regions.

The comparative study included a survey-based evaluation of the attitudes and knowledge of relevant office staff and representatives involved in the implementation of EU and national waste legislation. The results revealed that, while awareness of environmental policy goals is generally high, comprehension of specific legislative frameworks and practical application remains limited. This finding underpins several of the recommendations below, particularly those focusing on governance improvement, administrative capacity, and professional training.



## Strengthen governance, coordination, and policy coherence

Effective waste management requires coherent governance across all administrative levels. In Slovakia, responsibilities are relatively centralised, leading to uneven performance among municipalities. In Sicily, fragmented governance and inconsistent coordination between regional and local bodies often hinder implementation of EU waste targets.

The survey results confirmed that many local and regional officers have unclear understanding of their competences and obligations under EU and national waste legislation. This gap contributes to delays in planning, reporting, and enforcement.

To address these challenges, both regions should adopt an integrated governance model aligned with the EU Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC, amended by Directive (EU) 2018/851). Establishing inter-institutional coordination platforms and a regional waste observatory could improve communication, monitoring, and compliance. Consistent training for public officials should complement these governance reforms to ensure that policy objectives are effectively translated into practice.





## Modernise infrastructure and expand treatment capacity

Transitioning to a circular economy depends on sufficient treatment capacity and modern infrastructure. Both regions face gaps that limit recycling and perpetuate landfilling. Slovakia should focus on improving rural collection and composting systems, while Sicily should complete its network of composting and anaerobic digestion plants.

EU instruments such as the Cohesion Fund, LIFE, and RRF should be used strategically to achieve the 2035 EU landfill target (max. 10% of municipal waste). Integrated regional investment plans would improve sustainability and policy alignment.



## Invest in education, awareness, and social engagement

Public participation remains a decisive factor in achieving EU targets. Governments and municipalities should intensify environmental education campaigns, integrating waste literacy and circular economy principles into school curricula and vocational training.

Community-based initiatives such as Zero Waste schools, repair cafés, and local reward schemes can effectively change behaviour and enhance citizen engagement.



## Improve data management, monitoring and transparency

Accurate data is essential for good governance.

Slovakia's ISOH and Italy's MUD/RENTRI systems should be made interoperable and consistent with EU reporting standards.

Introducing digital traceability tools - such as GIS-based waste mapping and QR-coded collection systems - would improve transparency and help evaluate progress toward EU targets.





## **Advance the circular economy transition**

Waste management must evolve into a broader circular economy framework.

Slovakia's Circular Economy Roadmap (2022) and Sicily's Regional Waste Plan (2024) should be operationalised through pilot projects in key sectors (construction, food waste, plastics).

Participation in EU initiatives such as the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) can accelerate innovation and interregional learning.



## **Introduce economic incentives and tools to promote waste reduction (prevention) and reuse**

The circular economy requires not only recovery but also prevention: reduction, design, repair, reuse. In Italy, the OECD analysis highlights the potential of fiscal mechanisms in this regard. Promote collaborative economy models, repair and reuse centres, and incentives for businesses that favour reusable packaging or returnable containers. Also keep in mind the social and justice perspective: these tools must also be accessible to the most vulnerable citizens or minority communities.



## **Effectively combating illegal activities and illegal waste disposal**

In Italy, the presence of the “ecomafia” in waste management is well known, a phenomenon that compromises the entire management chain. In Slovakia, as in many countries, controls, environmental inspection, transparency and sanctions need to be strengthened in order to prevent illegal dumping, illicit waste trafficking and the “invisibilisation” of critical stages. In terms of communication and identity: emphasise that the right to a healthy environment is also a social and justice right, not just an “environmental issue”.







## **Ensure territorial self-sufficiency and widespread plant infrastructure, reducing regional/territorial differences**

Slovakia highlights areas where more than 50% of municipal waste still ends up in landfills, while in Italy, there is a problem of significant heterogeneity between regions, both in terms of separate collection and plant treatment. Policy should promote national/regional plans that ensure sufficient infrastructure, with uniform minimum standards, preventing certain territories from becoming “invisible” in the waste management chain.



## **Introduce Smart economic and regulatory instruments**

Both regions should expand Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) systems and increase landfill taxes to promote prevention and recycling. Strengthening Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), harmonised with Directive (EU) 2018/852, will encourage producers to integrate eco-design and reuse principles.

Establishing Green Transition Funds could help small and medium enterprises adopt circular models and stimulate innovation.





## Build capacity and foster international exchange

The questionnaire results from the comparative analysis highlighted a clear need for capacity building among public officials, especially regarding the understanding and application of EU waste legislation. Targeted training programmes should therefore focus on interpretation of legal frameworks, data reporting, and stakeholder coordination. International cooperation through Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, and Interreg should be expanded to facilitate peer learning and the transfer of best practices between regions with similar administrative and socio-economic challenges. This evidence-based approach ensures that reforms are not only designed effectively but are also implemented efficiently and with broad institutional support.



## Conclusions

*To meet the objectives of the European Green Deal, Circular Economy Action Plan, and Zero Pollution Strategy, both Slovakia and Sicily must move beyond formal compliance toward integrated, knowledge-based governance. By improving administrative capacity, investing in infrastructure, engaging citizens, and embracing circular principles, both regions can become models of sustainable waste management and regional cooperation within the European Union.*







# Got more questions?

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📷 Wastewise2025

*We'd love to hear it!*

