

LIFE BIOBEST

GUIDING THE MAINSTREAMING OF BEST BIO-WASTE RECYCLING
PRACTICES IN EUROPE

D3.4: Country Factsheets on the analysis of communication and engagement practices

WP3: Set of Guidelines

T3.4: Analysis of communication and engagement practices

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Public Report



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N°6: Factsheet on Exemplary Communication and Engagement Strategies for bio-waste collection | Slovakia: Focus on Bratislava

Starting in January 2021, Slovakia mandated separate kitchen waste collection in municipalities. Bratislava, along with other Slovak cities, received an exemption from waste management regulations due to its use of an incineration plant instead of landfills, granting them additional time to comply. Although Bratislava was initially slated to start these obligations in 2023, it began pilot projects in 2021 and continued into 2022 to ensure compliance with the deadline for bio-waste collection by January 1, 2023.

In 2022, Bratislava successfully implemented D-t-D collection of kitchen waste across all 17 districts, attributed to a phased communication strategy that began with a pilot project in October 2021 and progressively expanded to all districts from March to December 2022, demonstrating the effectiveness of a well-planned approach focused on engaging citizens.

BRATISLAVA		
Population (inhab.)	Density (inhab./km²)	Type
476,922 (2022)	1,297	Urban
Background elements		
<p>According to the obligation for municipalities under the new law, the city of Bratislava was mandated to implement kitchen waste collection starting from January 1, 2023. Recognising the need for a well-organised and user-friendly system, the city opted for a phased approach involving its districts, hence the decision to initiate the first stage in October 2021. The primary goal of introducing kitchen waste separate collection in Bratislava was to reduce, ideally eliminate bio-waste from residual waste, which at the time represented 20–25% of its volume. When combined with garden waste, kitchen and garden waste comprised up to 45% of the total residual waste.</p>		
Bio-waste collection model		
<p>By 2022, the city had successfully implemented D-t-D collection of kitchen waste in all 17 urban districts, involving over 140,000 households, a mixture of apartment buildings and single-unit households.</p> <p>Residents in apartment blocks were each provided with compostable bags, along with a 10-litre vented kitchen caddy to sort their kitchen waste. The process then required</p>		

them to deposit their separated food waste into appropriately labelled 120-litre or 240-litre brown collection bins that were for the whole building. Similarly, residents in single unit houses followed the same waste separation practice, but instead were provided with a 20-litre brown caddy for collection.



Image 1. Illustration of the bio-waste collection system in Bratislava city.

Source: Presentation Martina Gaislova, JRK, Brussels 2022

Kitchen waste is treated with an initial anaerobic digestion technology followed by a composting process and a final carbonisation step. The end result is a biochar substrate used in agriculture.

Garden waste is gathered from households in 240-litre brown bins and collected seasonally only, from March to November, with collections occurring once every two weeks.

Best Practices description

1. Pilot project in Lamač

In autumn 2021, a pilot project for the separate collection of kitchen waste was launched in the city district of Lamač, Bratislava's smallest neighbourhood. Before issuing brown bins and vented kitchen caddies to every household, residents received a flyer notifying them about the upcoming distribution of these collection tools.

Social media and local media (newspapers and radio) were utilised for communication purposes, and as an integral component of project preparation, an assessment of residents' readiness for change was conducted through a survey. The survey gathered opinions from participants, reflecting their perspectives as follows:

- 38% - we can't wait for the brown bin
- 31% - we have our own composter at home
- 20% - I am involved in community composting

- 9% – we do not separate bio-waste
- 2% – we want community composting – we are on the waiting list.

Trained staff distributed the kitchen caddies and a roll of compostable bags to households in single-unit houses. For those in apartment blocks, the distribution took place through designated collection points.



Image 2. Distribution points
Source: Zenzo



Image 3. Door-to-door distribution
Source: Zenzo

More than half a year after the launch of the pilot, a waste analysis aimed to assess waste sorting efficiency and to analyse other key factors, such as the proper use of composting bags, was conducted by a team consisting of members from the associations [OZ Zenzo](#) and [OZ Priatelja Zeme – SPZ](#), as well as the employees from the waste management municipal company [OLO](#), and the capital's environmental department.

Predominantly, residents opted for the compostable bags provided by the city, with a minority using non-compostable plastic bags. Results from the pilot showed contamination levels (impurities) were notably low, registering at 0.57% in apartment buildings and 0.25% in family houses. The positive outcomes were attributed to the practice of proper bags, the use of vented kitchen caddies, and the frequency of waste collection.

2. Implementation in other areas of the city

In other areas of the city, the distribution campaign of collection tools was coordinated through designated collection points strategically located in areas with high concentrations of people. Also, distribution points were established during weekends at street markets, festivals, and various events and in front of some supermarkets on Saturdays.

Much like the approach in the city district of Lamač, only trained staff were entrusted with the distribution of the starter kit, comprising a flyer, vented caddy, and

compostable bags, or optionally, a 20-litre caddy. They were responsible for providing explanations about the purpose and usage of the collection tools. Residents were required to acknowledge the receipt of the starter kit by signing at the distribution point, ensuring their visit and access to essential information.



Image 4. Vented kitchen caddy and 20-litre caddy

With the distribution campaign, significant investments were made to widely disseminate information across various channels about the launch of the kitchen separate collection system. This included:

- The distribution of **customised leaflets for each district**, produced by OLO, containing a detailed collection schedule, sorting rules, information on the correct use of the collection tool and the functioning of the collection system, highlighting the difference between the collection of kitchen waste and garden waste.
- **Regular updates on the city and OLO websites** with information on the collection system.
- **Coordination of communications** between each municipal district and the communication team from OLO.
- Preparation of **communication plan for all districts of the city on how best to communicate with citizens**, which was then to be adapted to different neighbourhoods (e.g. different collection days/times).
- **Media coverage** through articles in the press, podcasts, local and national TV, and city lights.
- **Educational videos** explaining the benefits of the kitchen waste collection system, the use of collection tools, and sorting instructions – featuring city technicians and elected officials, such as Mayor Matúš Vallo.
- **Videos** on public transport to raise awareness.



Image 5. First page of the information leaflet

ČO PATRÍ A NEPATRÍ DO KOMPOSTOVATELNÝCH VRECIEK NA KUCHYNSKÝ BIOODPAD?



Image 6. Sorting rules “What does and does not belong in compostable bags for kitchen waste?”

Key results

Residual waste generation per capita (2022)	209 kg/inhab./yr A decrease of nearly 6,000 tonnes (6%) compared to 2021
Bio-waste collection per capita (2022)	14 kg/inhab./yr Totals grew throughout the year as implementation spread across the city from March to December 2022.
Impurities in bio-waste (% of weight) (2022)	2.5%. The largest representation of non-degradable waste was plastic.

Lessons-learned

- Human resources challenges:** One of the major obstacles identified was the shortage of trained and well-informed people able to support the initiative and its communication campaign. This underlines the crucial role of recruiting knowledgeable staff or building the capabilities of existing ones, so that they can effectively support and deliver the key communications related to the programme's objectives.



- **Communication gaps:** Another notable issue was the insufficient year-round communication efforts, leading to a waning focus after the initial implementation phase. To sustain community engagement, **continuous communication throughout the year is imperative**. Additionally, the exclusive use of social media to announce the second round of compostable bag distribution created a communication gap, excluding citizens not active on these platforms. The resulting lack of awareness hindered kitchen waste separation efforts. Recognising and openly addressing initial mistakes, such as communication lapses leading to odour complaints, is vital. Transparent communication is crucial to prevent negative impacts on citizen involvement and maintain community support for the municipality's objectives on waste reduction.



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