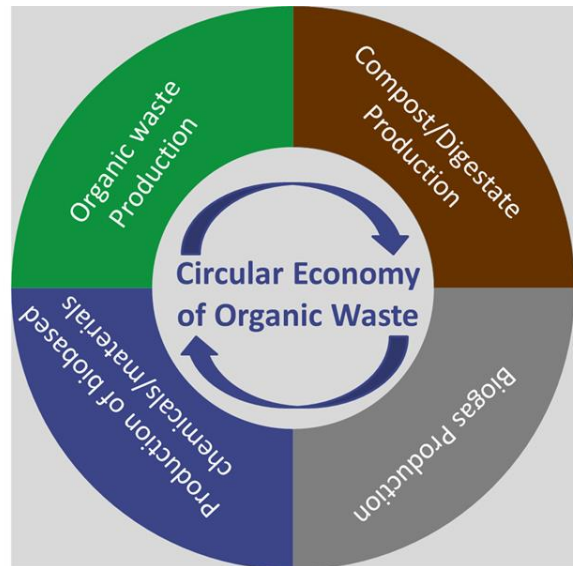


The Role of Bio-waste in the Emerging Circular Economy

Recycling biodegradable wastes and resource efficiency lie at the heart of environmental policy. According to the 'Communication on Future Steps in Bio-Waste Management in the European Union' (COM(2010)235) the EU produces between 118 and 138 million tonnes of bio-waste each year, of which about 88 million tonnes of bio-waste is related to municipal waste. These 88 million tonnes of bio-waste can be used as feedstock for compost and digestate production and as feedstock for the biobased economy to produce bioenergy (biogas, biofuels) and bio-based products (e.g. biochemicals, fibres and biopolymers). Currently only 30% (26 M tpa) is effectively recycled, meaning that over 50 M tpa is still wasted each year.



Besides the substantial effect on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from landfills, input of stabilised organic matter to soils will result in C-sequestration. Compost and digestate application as organic fertiliser will also recover nutrients like NPK. Compost used as soil improver will restore soil quality and can be used in growing media. In this way bio-waste gives a maximum contribution to a sustainable, circular economy.

The Role of Bio-waste in the Emerging Circular Economy

As part of the consultation on Circular Economy, we call the EU to:

- **Set an obligation for implementing separate collection of bio-waste** in the member states.
- Establish **targets for bio-waste recycling** (bio-waste recycling targets based on separate collection) as a fundamental driver to secure investment in sustainable recycling of bio-waste.
- Develop clear and well-targeted provisions **and harmonized calculation methods** in order to help member state administrations and municipalities to develop integrated recycling schemes.
- Finalise the **end-of-waste criteria for compost and digestate**.
- Develop a **comprehensive product – resource-based – waste legislation** to support the use of secondary materials recycled from organic waste.

About ECN

The European Compost Network (ECN) is the leading European membership organisation promoting sustainable recycling practices by composting and anaerobic digestion of organic resources and guarding over the quality and safe use of the recovered organic fertilisers/soil improvers.

The European Compost Network is a membership organisation with 71 members from 27 European Countries. Members include all European bio-waste organisations and their operating plants, research, policy making, consultants and authorities.

Via the member organisations, ECN represents more than 2000 experts and plant operators with more than 25 million tonnes of biological waste treatment capacity.