

SMART WASTE - Innovation in Waste Management Policies

Report on final results of local evaluation activities in Bulgaria

Bulgarian Association of Municipal Environmental Experts

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1. Policy instrument(s) evaluated

The Policy Instrument subject to evaluation is Operational Programme Environment 2014-2020, Priority Axis 2 Waste (OPE).

2. Evaluation process

The evaluation was carried out in the period **November 2019 - July 2021** and it corresponds to the **shared Methodology for evaluation of innovation in SMART WASTE partners' Waste Management policies.**

The main objective of the evaluation was to provide analysis of the contribution of the Policy Instrument to innovation in waste management with regard to the Waste hierarchy set out by Waste Framework Directive. The Directive sets the basic concepts and definitions related to waste management, including prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling, recovery and disposal.

The evaluation of support to innovation in waste management in OP "Environment" 2014 -2020 include the following elements: Specific support for demo projects in waste management; Achieved targets for recycling of materials and reduction of biodegradable household waste share in total disposed waste; Funded projects total eligible expenditure.



The quantitative parameter chosen is:

$$\text{Indicator (year N)} = \left[\frac{\text{Parameter most recent value} - \text{year N}}{\text{Parameter target value}} \right] * 100$$

The evaluation is based on existing monitoring data from the Programme monitoring system, strategic and regulatory documents, as well as previous analyses were used to carry out the evaluation. **Primary data** was collected through the following methods: desk study; meetings both bilateral and online workshops with key stakeholders being MA of OPE, environmental experts on municipal and national level; two online survey among municipalities that are potential beneficiaries of funding under OP Environment 2014 – 2020, Priority Axis 2 – Waste.

Analyses were carried out through a set of tools appropriate to the evaluation questions, as follows: analysis of intervention logic, stakeholder analysis, needs analysis, indicator analysis.

3. Evaluation results

The evaluation main findings include identified key failures in support of innovation of waste management system but also some positive developments through pilot projects paving the ground for future improvement mainly in the new programming period 2021 – 2027.

The key failure identified is the lack of specific support of OPE to innovation in waste management system. The main reason for this, according to Smart Waste Evaluation Methodology application, is simply that OPE supports development of landfills and the system relies mainly on the subsequent separation of mixed municipal waste. Although the support in the **Waste sector** (Priority Axis 2) is in line with the needs in the area of municipal waste management, the target set for increasing waste recycling capacity is not ambitious enough given the funds allocated for this purpose.

Innovation in waste management system and applied technologies is necessary to achieve the goals set in Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 of the EU Parliament. This Directive sets long-term objectives for the Union's waste management and gives economic operators a clear direction for the investments needed to achieve those objectives. The investments in waste management infrastructure in Bulgaria are needed to ensure refinement of separate source waste collection systems and collection of clean raw materials. Currently the investments through ERDF funds are limited and are focussed on green waste collection - total 14 projects at the value of 35 mln Euro. It means that only 11% of the total EUR 318 million allocated for waste management is used for collection of clean materials.

The applied method by the municipalities for determining the municipal waste charge is also a problem which hampers the introduction of innovation in waste management system in the Bulgarian municipalities.

Lack of support by the programme of information campaigns and raising awareness among citizens is another problem identified in the evaluation process of level of support to innovation in OPE.

A positive development of OPE was the support for development of pilot demonstration projects for development of new, non-traditional successful waste management interventions. In total 19 projects have been approved in 2020 by OPE under Priority Axis 2 – Waste at the total amount of EUR 3.8 million. The innovative aspect in all the projects is seen in specific support for demo projects in waste management and increasing recycling and re-use capacity on municipal level as well as awareness raising and information campaign among citizens.

4. Next steps

In order to overcome the possible failures identified the possible next steps includes proposition to OP Environment 2014 2020 to change the method of determining the municipal waste charge. It should be cost-oriented and based on the 'pay as you throw' principle.

Next recommendation is to provide stronger support and efforts to conduct awareness and motivation campaigns for citizens in order to ensure their active participation in separate collection systems.

A change to the current system for the collection of mixed municipal waste is also needed. Containers placed on the streets without clearly identified users are a prerequisite for poor control by the competent authorities. Investments in small scale recycling facilities is also much needed. Without treatment infrastructure close to source, the costs are getting higher and because of transportation, environmental and sanitation regulatory compliance requirements.

Most important is the integration of all that mix of measures to be implemented in synchronized manner – without information and awareness campaigns beforehand, without adequate tax system and infrastructure for separate collection, without well organized schemes and final treatment of the materials, the efforts will be unsuccessful.

The results from the policy instrument evaluation and the recommendations included will be communicated to the Ministry of Environment and MA of OPE during regular annual National Assembly hosted by BAMEE twice a year.