

Municipal waste statistics project

Does the variation in municipal waste among Nordic countries reflect actual differences or is it a result of inconsistent applications of the common EU methodology across these countries?



Consistent and comparable municipal waste data across EU member states is essential for **designing efficient policies** for increasing recycling, waste prevention, and for **a fair and accurate evaluation** of whether member states reach the legally binding targets for municipal waste.

The municipal waste statistics project has examined discrepancies in municipal waste data in the Nordic countries. Despite the Nordic countries' socioeconomic similarities, significant variations in reported municipal waste per capita indicate potential differences in their interpretations of municipal waste.

Statistics highlight:

- 1. a notable variation in municipal waste generation per capita across the Nordic countries,
- 2. inconsistencies in the share of municipal waste from households versus municipal waste from other sources, like public institutions, businesses, and industries.

	Denmark	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Generated municipal waste per capita	800 kg	686 kg	736 kg	418 kg
Share of municipal waste originating from households	69%	47%	52%	84%

The Nordic countries have adjusted their measurement of recycled municipal waste to align with the revised Waste Framework Directives' new calculation point and delineation of municipal waste. This resulted in a drop in recycling rates, regardless of measuring methodology (either based on reported amounts or average loss rates).

What is the main focus of the project?

Investigation of discrepancies in the Nordic countries' approach to EU methodology on municipal waste, which challenge the comparability of municipal waste statistics.

What is the main result of the project?

Identification of ambiguities in the common EU methodology for municipal waste that hinder streamlined measurement of municipal waste.

What is municipal waste?

Municipal waste is defined in the Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC and elaborated in Recital 10, Directive 2018/851 as:

"[...] waste from households and waste from other sources, [...], which is similar in nature and composition to waste from households."

Which recycling targets?

New recycling targets for 2025, 2030, and 2035 were adopted in the revision of the Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC in 2018.

THE REPORT

Municipal waste statistics inconsistencies
A Nordic perspective

The project's findings and recommendations are detailed in **this report**.

The appendices offer an in-depth view of each country's waste management and organizational set-up impacting the municipal waste statistics.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project Group
Environmental Protection Agencies in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

Project Coordinator
The Danish Environmental Protection Agency

Project Period
2024-2025
Funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers



Nordic Council of Ministers



Key Recommendations Streamlining Municipal Waste Measurement

Make it clear

Establish a clear definition and purpose for measuring municipal waste.

Avoid inconsistencies

Avoid inconsistencies across the Waste Framework Directive and Eurostat Guidance document.

Keep it simple

Focus on a simple and pragmatic approach to the definition and measurement of municipal waste.

Take note

Any alterations to the delimitation of municipal waste require a reassessment of recycling rate targets due to their impact on the ability to reach the targets.

Insights & Solutions A Glimpse at the Project's Recommendations

PROJECT FINDINGS

Substantial differences in the countries' approaches to defining and calculating municipal waste from other sources than households.

Substantial differences in the countries' approaches to distinguishing municipal packaging waste from other sources than households.

Significant differences in the countries' generated municipal biowaste is caused by the difference in the amounts of garden and park waste.

Substantial differences in the countries' approaches to exclude construction and demolition waste.

SOLUTIONS

Clearer guidance on the definition of what should be understood as similar in nature and composition to waste from households. An approach for Eurostat could be to use a combination of LoW codes and NACE-codes.

Clearer criteria defining what packaging waste should be included as municipal waste.

Garden and park waste should be excluded from municipal waste statistics and future reduction and recycling targets.

The countries assess the proportions of construction and demolition waste of impregnated wood and other hazardous waste and decide whether to report the amounts based on a predetermined reporting threshold developed by Eurostat.

Best Practice Recommendations Enhancing Municipal Waste Statistics

The project provides recommendations for how countries can enhance their municipal waste statistics, as detailed in the report. These recommendations are derived from the project's identification of barriers to achieving high-quality data for the municipal waste reporting.