

## **From landfilling to waste valorization: a policy-mix for waste management in Palárikovo Municipality**

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The case study was analyzed within DYNAMIX project, funded within the 7th Framework Programme and focusing on policy mixes for natural resources management and resource efficiency. The analysis focuses on the instruments of the policy mix in order to understand their mutual interaction and the conditions necessary for achieving targets.

The Municipality of Palarikovo, Slovakia, has developed a policy mix for managing waste in a very unstructured and sometimes informal way, but has done that so effectively that it achieved to decrease landfilled waste from 100% to 37% (with a peak of 25% in 2005) and to increase recycling and composting from zero to 63%, thus becoming an example for waste management for the entire country. In addition, the policy mix resulted in several positive environmental outcomes: over the past 14 years, it was possible to close the life cycle for 50.4% of all waste produced, and in 2011, 45 Mio Mega joules of energy and 27,000 tons of greenhouse gases were saved thanks to recycling activities.

From the analysis, it resulted that the initial stimulus for change was due to progressive change in the national waste legislation. Later on, the success of the strategy was made possible due to the implementation of: an integrated waste management system for waste recycling and composting, the introduction of a 'Pay-as-You-Throw' scheme, and the development of an awareness program targeting inhabitants and supported by the NGO Friends of Earth. In addition, the Municipality was supported by the Recycling Fund, a non-state special purpose fund to pool financial means that resulted essential to cover part of the costs for running the waste management system and for buying machineries. The contribution of the Recycling Fund is calculated based on certain quotas of commodities that the Municipality is obliged to collect in order to obtain the financial support.

Two main lessons were learned from the analysis of the policy mix. Firstly, the results show that raising inhabitants' awareness was extremely important. The awareness campaign was conducted in such a way that people felt emotionally attached to the programme and proud to collaborate: currently, 98% of inhabitants in the municipality participate in the scheme, and in many cases the request for introducing the separation of further commodities comes from inhabitants.

Secondly, the way the system is organized appears to be controversial: by depending on the financial support granted by the Recycling Fund, the Municipality is actually encouraged to produce waste. Although Palarikovo performed a shift on the Waste Hierarchy (from landfilling to recycling and composting), many opportunities were lost in terms of reuse and prevention. Thus: if such instrument can be essential for supporting countries still performing landfilling, different approaches should be considered in order to achieve a further shift on the Waste Hierarchy (from recycling to reuse and prevention), for instance by targeting lifestyle and consumption patterns.