

2.2 Waste management

ASSESSMENT

Current situation in the area of waste management is not satisfactory. Formal commitments are either not fulfilled or improperly fulfilled – which is blocking the progress in this area.

RATIONALE

New legislation is still in the preparation phase; adopted legislation is faced with significant barriers on the implementation level.

Developments

The two key documents, intended to replace the old ones, are still in preparation phase. The new Waste Management Strategy is under development, and an upgraded version of the Law on Waste Management is in the draft version (Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Waste Management). Drafting of the new Waste Management Strategy is taking place without a proper public debate about the results, strengths and weaknesses of the previous Strategy (2010-2019). Although the Draft of the Law on Amendments to the Law on Waste Management was subject to the public hearing back in October 2013, the current stage the document development is unknown.

Challenges

On the local level, although significant number of municipalities has developed and adopted their waste management local action plans, in most cases the action plans are not adequately implemented. While the existing regulation in the field of Environment stresses the importance of local governments in addressing environmental problems, there is a lack of sufficient financial and institutional capacities on local level to ensure adequate infrastructure and create teams who will take the full responsibility for waste legislation implementation.

There is a lack of reliable data on waste quantities and composition for specific waste streams. In addition, all national and local policies have so far been formulated and based on scarce empirical data about quantities and composition of deposited waste, including the existing Waste Management Strategy, which should soon be replaced with a new one. The new strategic document needs to be based on the trends in the generation and disposal of waste, which can only be monitored on the basis of adequate and objective statistics.

The key weaknesses of the existing waste management system include insufficient waste service coverage, the low cost recovery of existing waste management operations due to the low fee collection efficiency, the lack of primary waste segregation, inadequate infrastructure for

the treatment and disposal of waste and the insufficient number of regional waste management centres.

Not more than 70 percent of the population in Serbia, mainly concentrated in urban areas, is covered by an organized municipal waste collection service. Public communal enterprises registered on the territory of particular municipalities provide services using obsolete equipment, and the current percentage of service coverage has not changed since 1990, leaving rural areas to manage the waste that they produce individually and on an ad hoc basis. (*Tech and Capacities for mitigation GHG emission from Waste, 2012 REC*).

The current level of recycling and waste utilization is inadequate. Although the primary recycling in Serbia is regulated by law and instructs for the separation of paper, glass and metal in specially marked containers, recycling does not work in practice. Collection of recyclable materials from municipal waste is performed mostly by informal collectors within the illegal flows. According to civil society organizations more than 50 000 people in Serbia live from collecting recyclables. According to the report of NGO Praxis¹⁰, it is estimated that in 2011, 70% of Roma aged 15 to 64 were employed in the informal sector. Collection of recyclables is the most common form of self-employment in the informal sector.

Even though there is a high content of organic components in municipal waste, there are no facilities for biological treatment of municipal waste. In Serbia, there is no incineration of municipal waste.

There are more than 3000 illegal landfills in Serbia. Most municipalities dispose waste at their own landfills, which fail to meet the minimum technical requirements set out under the EU Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC). Municipal landfills are either non-compliant or unregistered, the latter being considered illegal dumpsites (*Tech and Capacities for mitigation GHG emission from Waste, 2012 REC*).

Non-compliant landfills are also the major source of GHG emissions. In 1990, the contribution of the waste sector to overall GHG emissions was 1,930 Gg CO₂-eq (2.38 percent of total GHG emissions). The greatest potential for the reduction of GHG emissions is in the construction of regional sanitary landfills. If systems for landfill gas flaring and recovery were to be installed at the largest landfills only (used for the disposal of around 40 percent of the total municipal waste generated), emissions of methane would be reduced by around 798 Gg CO₂-eq per year (Initial Communication on Climate Change of the Republic of Serbia, 2010).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the previous, we hereby find the following measures necessary:

- Implementing waste policies and measures at all levels;

¹⁰http://www.praxis.org.rs/images/praxis_downloads/Analiza_glavnih_problema_i_prepreka_u_pristupu_Roma_pravima_na_rad_i_zaposljavanje.pdf

- Establishing an efficient system of reporting on waste and waste statistics;
- Making waste management statistics publicly available;
- Improving capacities of local municipalities to implement waste management policies (staff, funds and equipment);
- Developing financing mechanisms to support strategic priority needs;
- Closing and remediating illegal landfills;
- Upgrading existing non-compliant municipal landfills to meet EU standards;
- Using GHG abatement technologies at regional landfills in order to control emissions.