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# Assessment report on piloting activities



Circular Organic Management



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# Introduction

The COM: Circular Organic Management project aims to foster behavioral change in schools regarding food and organic waste management. As part of this project, 48 educators from six participating countries—Greece, Turkey, Spain, Romania, Italy, and Slovenia—were invited to attend online "Training of Teacher Trainers' Workshop."

These workshops focused on empowering educators with innovative methodologies and materials, equipping them to serve as moderators by organizing their own training events in their respective regions. The training materials used were developed in previous stages of the project and are tailored to address the unique challenges faced by each country in promoting sustainable organic waste management practices in schools.

After the workshops, 30 educators that participated in the workshop had to conduct a pilot testing at schools of what they have learned during the workshops. The piloting activities conducted in the partner countries provided essential insights into the practical application of these methodologies. Throughout this phase, educators implemented the materials within their local school environments, gathering data on both the successes and challenges encountered. The pilot process also involved collecting testimonials and interviews from key stakeholders, including teachers, school administrators, and students. These reflections highlighted the effectiveness of the training program in altering perceptions and behaviors toward organic waste, while also offering valuable feedback for further refinement.

This assessment report summarizes the findings from the piloting activities across all participating countries. It compiles evidence from a range of sources, which reveal the social, economic, and cultural impact of the project. These outcomes underscore the broader benefits of the program, particularly in terms of increasing awareness, shifting behaviors, and encouraging sustainable organic waste practices within school communities.

As a partnership, we created a comprehensive methodology for conducting the "Training of Teacher Trainers' Workshops," ensuring that all sessions were homogenous across the six participating countries. This methodology was developed with the goal of standardizing the workshop format, ensuring consistent delivery of key objectives and achievements, and effectively engaging the target group of educators. Each session introduced participants to essential online tools and techniques, including breakout rooms and group activities, while maintaining a structured timing schedule to optimize participation and learning outcomes.

The workshop structure was designed to foster an interactive and engaging learning environment. Each session followed a clear and consistent format, beginning with an introduction to the workshop agenda and team, and utilizing a blend of slides, videos, and interactive activities to maintain interest. To encourage collaboration, participants were regularly divided into breakout rooms for group activities and discussions. Key topics, such as the life cycle of bio-waste and organic waste management, were explored through interactive content, with facilitators using real-time tools like whiteboards and shared documents to enhance engagement.

Timing was a critical component of the workshop design, with each session structured to keep content manageable and avoid participant fatigue. Day 1 through Day 5 sessions focused on different aspects of organic waste management, from household production to school-based reduction systems, all while incorporating Q&A sessions and participant feedback.

The workshops concluded with a summary of key takeaways, further resources for continued learning, and an invitation for participants to provide feedback, ensuring that the training sessions not only delivered valuable knowledge but also fostered long-term engagement and sustainability in their educational contexts.

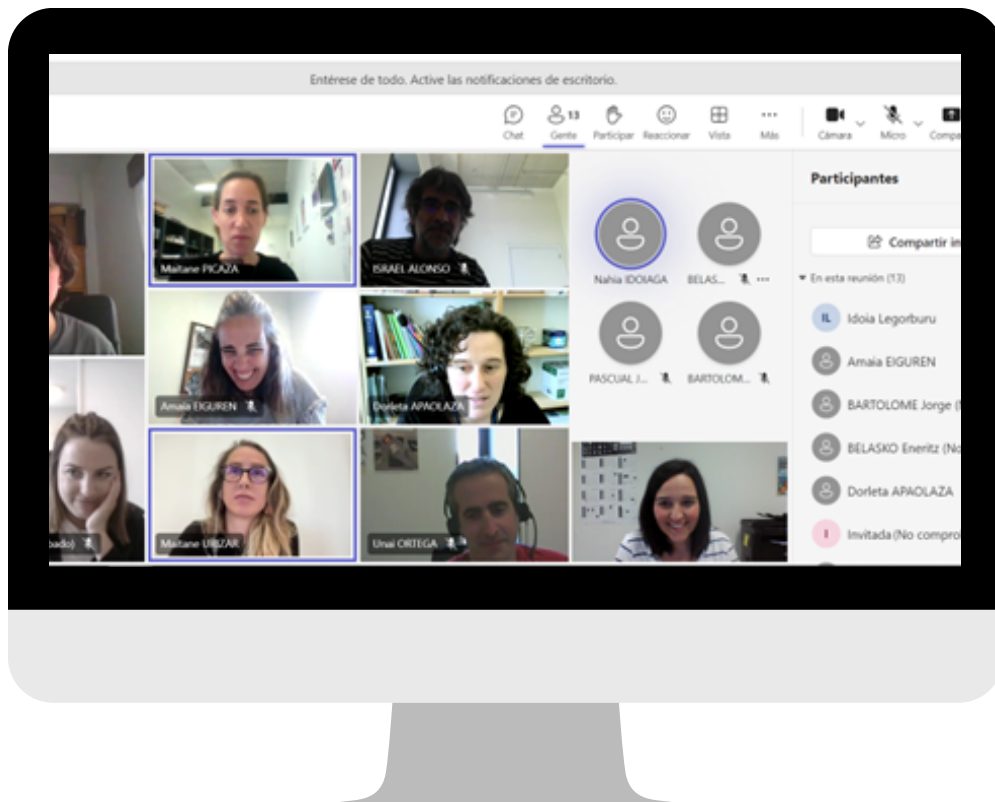
Let's review below the effectiveness of workshops and pilot testing in each partner country

# SPAIN



On May 20, 2024, a key workshop was held online in Basques country, Spain, hosted by UPV/EHU. The workshop gathered 13 participants and followed a structured agenda aimed at providing comprehensive training on the project's modules, which focus on organic waste management and circular economy principles.

The session began with a welcome and introduction (11:00 - 11:30), followed by two hours of in-depth module training (11:30 - 13:30), and concluded with an interactive Q&A session after a short break (14:00 - 15:00). Throughout the workshop, participants were introduced to both the educational materials developed for the project and online tools to enhance their future training sessions with students.



Following the workshop, eight of the educators who attended proceeded to pilot the materials in their respective schools. The piloting phase involved students in sessions that lasted between 45 minutes to an hour, depending on the teacher's schedule. Feedback from the educators reflected a generally positive reception of the materials and the topics discussed. One teacher shared, "I think it's very interesting, which gives you the opportunity to learn a lot," while another highlighted the materials' suitability for secondary school students, particularly for 3rd and 4th graders. Overall, the teachers found the content engaging and useful in explaining key concepts related to waste management and circular economy in a classroom setting.



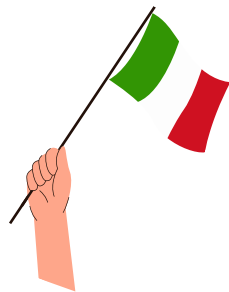
When asked about the specific strategies employed during the piloting to engage students with waste management concepts, teachers noted that their approach primarily involved discussions and visual aids, such as explanations and images. However, they acknowledged that more advanced techniques were not utilized.

Teachers also shared that students demonstrated varying levels of knowledge about waste management, with some indicating familiarity with the topic from previous lessons. For instance, one teacher mentioned, “I went from table to table to make sure everything was being understood correctly in the groups,” while others observed that the students eagerly shared what they knew about the subject after watching related videos. These insights will help refine future training sessions, ensuring that educators are better equipped to engage students and deepen their understanding of organic waste management.





# ITALY



On March 20, 2024, a workshop was hosted in Italy, with 10 participants, to introduce and train educators on the modules developed within the COM project. The workshop aimed to equip participants with the tools and knowledge necessary to promote circular organic waste management within schools.

The agenda included a welcome and introduction (16:00 - 16:30), followed by a comprehensive training on the modules (16:30 - 18:30), which covered topics such as the life cycle of bio-waste and effective waste management strategies. After a brief break (18:30 - 18:45), the session concluded with an interactive Q&A (18:45 - 19:15), where participants had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify key concepts discussed throughout the day.



Following the workshop, the participating educators were encouraged to pilot the materials in their schools, applying the methodologies to real-life teaching scenarios. Feedback from this phase revealed that the educators found the materials highly relevant and adaptable to various school settings. They noted that the training had provided them with a strong foundation to engage their students in discussions about organic waste management and circular economy concepts. Several teachers expressed that the interactive nature of the training, particularly the use of visuals and group activities, helped them grasp how to convey these concepts effectively in the classroom.

During the piloting phase, teachers reported varied responses from students regarding their existing knowledge of waste management. Some students demonstrated a basic understanding of the topic, which had been previously discussed in other lessons, while others needed more guidance and support. Teachers used a range of engagement strategies, such as small group discussions and practical examples, to ensure that all students were able to follow and participate in the learning activities. Overall, the piloting phase in Italy was successful in testing the materials and identifying areas for improvement in future sessions.



# SLOVENIA



On May 6, 2024, a hybrid workshop was held in Slovenia. The workshop, organized by MIITR, involved eight teachers and two staff members, and aimed to introduce the participants to the educational modules and methodologies for promoting circular organic waste management in schools. The session began at 18:00 and provided a comprehensive overview of the materials, demonstrating how educators could effectively apply these concepts in their classrooms. Through a mix of presentations and interactive activities, the workshop ensured that participants left with a solid understanding of both the content and the tools necessary to engage students in organic waste management topics.



Following the workshop, the teachers moved into the pilot phase, where they implemented the learned materials within their school environments. Feedback from this phase was overwhelmingly positive. Of particular note, three of the participating teachers, who specialized in foreign languages, creatively adapted the materials using role-playing exercises and debates, integrating extra material to enhance the students' learning experience. Their use of interactive teaching strategies highlighted the flexibility of the provided content, allowing them to connect waste management concepts with broader educational themes.

The educational materials themselves were praised for their quality and relevance, with teachers expressing satisfaction in how well they were designed for classroom use. The combination of structured activities, clear explanations, and the potential for creative adaptation made the materials suitable across different subjects and teaching styles. This feedback from the Slovenian pilot phase demonstrated the success of the workshop and materials in not only conveying the importance of circular organic waste management but also in engaging students through varied and dynamic teaching methods.

# ROMANIA



In Romania, two online workshops were conducted to train educators in implementing the project's methodologies and materials. The first workshop took place on December 19, 2023, with a focus on introducing participants to the life cycle of biological waste, from production to collection and prevention. The session, which began at 4:00 PM, included four participants and followed a structured agenda. The first 10 minutes covered the presentation of the project's objectives, achievements, target group, and the tools and supporting materials available for use. Participants were also given an overview of the activities planned for the project. The workshop then transitioned into an interactive session, where the partners and team were introduced, and participants engaged in a knowledge exchange. Between 4:20 PM and 4:50 PM, the session focused on the life cycle of biowaste, including interactive discussions and activities designed to facilitate a deeper understanding of the subject. The workshop concluded with a summary of the main points and a feedback session, allowing participants to share their thoughts and recommendations.



The second workshop was held on February 8, 2024, and followed a similar format, with an emphasis on reinforcing the concepts learned in the first session. This workshop also focused on the life cycle of biological waste and its practical applications in educational settings. Like the first session, it began with a presentation of the project's goals and tools, followed by an interactive knowledge session between the participants and the project team. The workshop provided a platform for discussing the practical steps educators could take to integrate waste management practices into their teaching. The session also included activities and discussions, culminating in a reflection on the main conclusions and a request for feedback from participants.



Following these workshops, the piloting phase took place, where teachers tested the materials in their respective schools. A key component of the piloting involved the use of food waste factsheets to measure household waste, giving students hands-on experience with tracking and understanding waste production. The feedback collected during this phase highlighted the effectiveness of the factsheets in raising awareness among students about their own household waste habits, while also encouraging educators to incorporate waste management strategies into their regular curriculum. These insights have been instrumental in refining the project's materials and ensuring their relevance and applicability in classroom settings.

# GREECE



On May 14, 2024, the COM: Circular Organic Management project hosted an online training workshop for educators in Greece. The event was organized by Incommon and Innovation Hive and gathered 29 participants via Zoom. The workshop aimed to introduce the project's objectives and provide a detailed overview of the educational materials developed within the project. After a brief welcome and introduction of the organizing teams, participants were asked to present themselves and share their expectations for the workshop.

Following this, Innovation Hive gave an in-depth presentation of the COM project, outlining its purpose, the needs it addresses, and its phases of development. This was followed by a Q&A session, during which participants had the opportunity to discuss the project and its aims.

The workshop then shifted focus to the educational materials, with a detailed presentation of their structure and content. Participants were guided through each chapter, with explanations of how the materials can be used in a classroom setting to promote awareness and engagement in organic waste management.

After another Q&A session, the participants engaged in a practical activity in small groups, where they were tasked with mapping the existing processes, networks, and infrastructure of organic waste management in their local areas. The groups then developed projects and campaigns to inspire people to reduce waste and improve organic waste management systems. After 45 minutes, each group presented their work, followed by a plenary discussion to exchange ideas and insights.



At the end of the workshop, participants reflected on the possibility of using the COM project's materials in their schools and everyday practices. The session closed with a discussion about the next steps, specifically the pilot testing of the educational materials and how teachers could provide feedback for the project's future development. Participants also evaluated the event, expressing their thoughts on the overall experience and their readiness to implement what they had learned.



After the workshop, the pilot testing followed with the teachers that attended the online workshop trying their new acquired knowledge in the classroom.





Feedback from the piloting phase indicated that while students were generally aware of waste management, they lacked in-depth knowledge. Teachers found the COM materials useful but noted that supplementary resources such as PowerPoint presentations and videos were needed to enhance understanding. In one case, time constraints in a lab setting made it difficult for students to complete calculations, so teachers used Excel spreadsheets as an additional tool. This insight led to the suggestion that COM project partners consider producing similar supportive materials for future use. The feedback underscored the practical applications of the materials while highlighting areas for improvement to make them more accessible and adaptable in various teaching contexts.



# TURKEY



On March 29, 2024, partner INNOMATE held an online training workshop in Turkey. The workshop aimed to familiarize educators with the project's objectives and educational materials, providing them with the tools to implement waste management activities in their classrooms. The session began with a brief welcome at 13:30, followed by an introduction to the COM project. Participants were informed about the project's goals, the need it addresses, and its partnership network. The objectives of the workshop were then clearly outlined, helping participants understand the expected outcomes of the training.

The main part of the workshop focused on demonstrating key topics related to circular organic management, with a particular emphasis on the life cycle of organic waste. Educators were introduced to various modules that form the foundation of the COM project's educational framework. The module training, which was conducted in two parts with a short break, provided in-depth knowledge on how to effectively teach students about waste management and circular economy concepts. The training included interactive sessions, where participants could ask questions and engage with the material through practical examples. The Q&A session at the end of the workshop allowed teachers to clarify any points and discuss how to adapt the materials to their school environments.

Following the workshop, some teachers continued with the piloting phase in schools. They implemented the activities and modules they had learned during the training and found the experience interesting and engaging. The feedback from the piloting phase highlighted the relevance of the materials, particularly in sparking conversations about waste management among students. Teachers appreciated the practical approach and reported that students showed curiosity and interest in learning more about the circular economy and sustainable waste practices. This feedback provided valuable insights into how the materials could be further refined and tailored to meet the needs of different educational settings.

# Conclusions

The COM: Circular Organic Management project workshops across six countries were successful in training educators on organic waste management and circular economy principles. Teachers across Spain, Italy, Slovenia, Romania, Greece, and Turkey found the materials relevant and engaging for their students, with some adaptations made to fit varying classroom needs.

Key feedback highlighted that while the content was well-suited for secondary school students, the inclusion of more interactive elements and additional support materials could enhance student engagement. Overall, the workshops and piloting activities were positively received, with educators gaining confidence in using the materials, and students showing increased awareness and interest in waste management.