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WASTEREDUCE

June 2025

This is the 7th WASTEREDUCE Newsletter

Dear Readers,
Welcome to the 7th edition of our WASTEREDUCE Newsletter!

Partnership
IT - 4
HR - 4

01/02/2024
31/07/2026

Total budget
1.657.742,23
EUR

In every issue, we explore key themes related to waste management and sustainability, offering a mix of informative content, project updates, and stories from the field. This time, we turn our attention to a topic at the heart of sustainable development: ***Circular Economy in Waste Management****. It's a pressing challenge with wide-reaching impact, and this edition delves into how different actors and regions are tackling it.*

As always, we share highlights from recent project milestones and a look ahead to what's coming next. You will also find our regular "Region in Focus" feature, which this time brings you along on ***a field trip to Italy's Veneto region****, showcasing local approaches and good practices.*

Thank you for staying connected with us — we hope you find this issue both engaging and inspiring.

Warm regards,
Your WASTEREDUCE Team

WASTEREDUCE

is an EU funded project in collaboration with eight partners. Together, we will tackle waste management challenges in protected and Natura 2000 areas across Italy and Croatia. Our goal is to enhance waste prevention, reduce environmental impacts, and improve cooperation among stakeholders.

ISTARSKA ŽUPANIJA
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NATURA HISTRICA

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Dipartimento di Scienze della Vita

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ETIFOR valuing nature

INSTITUT ZA POLJOPRIVREDU I TURIZAM

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Natura Jadera

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CONTENT

The Power of Circular Economy

The circular economy is no longer just a theoretical framework, it is a rapidly accelerating transformation. With real-world policy backing and measurable progress, it is reshaping how Europe, and increasingly, the world, produces, consumes, and regenerates resources.

What Goes Around: The Power of the Circular Economy

You may have come across the term “circular economy” in conversations about sustainability and reducing waste. But what does it actually involve?

Unlike the traditional “take-make-dispose” model, the **circular economy aims to keep resources in use for as long as possible.** It emphasizes reusing, recycling, repairing, and sharing, minimizing waste and environmental impact throughout a product’s entire lifecycle. From design to end-of-life, every step matters. Consider modular electronics that are easy to repair, or standardized chargers like the USB Type-C, now mandated across the European Union. The approach also encourages smarter consumption habits—such as car sharing, tool rental, or staying in someone’s extra room through platforms like BlaBlaCar or Couchsurfing.

And it goes beyond consumer habits. Behind the scenes, innovations like converting organic waste into biofuel or using mushroom-based materials to create sustainable furniture are transforming industries. These shifts reduce the need for new resources and help cut pollution.

At its core, the circular economy rethinks how we design, use, and dispose of products—moving away from a throwaway culture and toward one that prioritizes durability and resource efficiency.

Are you ready to rethink how we consume?
The shift to a circular economy is already underway.

How It All Started: The Rise of the Circular Economy

Europe formally committed to the circular economy in 2015 with the launch of its first Circular Economy Action Plan. The initiative aimed to reduce dependence on imported raw materials, enhance sustainability, and contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
This commitment gained momentum with the introduction of the European Green Deal in 2019, which placed sustainability at the center of EU policymaking. In 2020, the EU released an updated Action Plan and began implementing a series of significant measures:

- Sustainable Batteries Proposal (December 2020)
- Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE) (2021)
- Sustainable Products Initiative, including measures on circular textiles and sustainable construction (March 2022)
- Packaging Waste and Bioplastics Strategy (November 2022)
- Right to Repair and Green Claims Regulation (March 2023)
- Revised Circular Economy Monitoring Framework (May 2023)

This shift continues to evolve. The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), effective from 2024, mandates that products meet specific standards for durability, repairability, and traceability—the latter enabled by the introduction of a Digital Product Passport.

Additional major policy initiatives include:

- Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) – scheduled for implementation in 2026
- Critical Raw Materials Act
- Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)
- End-of-Life Vehicle Recycling Rules and the Clean Industrial Deal (2025)

Bioeconomy: Nature-Powered Innovation for a Sustainable Future

The bioeconomy plays a fundamental role within the circular economy. It focuses on harnessing natural, renewable resources, such as plants, animals, algae, and organic waste, to support industry, supply food, and generate energy in more sustainable ways. Spanning sectors from agriculture and forestry to fisheries and biotechnology, the bioeconomy creates vital links between land and sea, food and energy, and nature and innovation.

The EU's 2018 Bioeconomy Strategy set five major goals to guide this transition:

- Secure healthy food and nutrition
- Use natural resources responsibly
- Cut dependence on fossil fuels
- Tackle climate change
- Create jobs and boost EU competitiveness

Biomass: Nature's Raw Material

At the heart of the bioeconomy is biomass—organic material from forests, farms, fisheries, and even food waste. This includes:

- Forestry: wood, bark, mushrooms, berries
- Agriculture: crops, livestock by-products, and residues
- Fisheries & Aquaculture: algae, shellfish, and fish waste
- Organic Waste: from households, restaurants, and food industries

All of this can be reused, recycled, or converted into something new and useful.

What Does the Bioeconomy Produce?

A lot more than you might expect. Imagine:

- Paper from fruit peels
- Furniture from mushrooms
- Paints made from sunflowers
- Textiles spun from wood pulp or plant waste
- Bioplastics and packaging from algae, starch, or even coffee grounds

It's not just greener—it's smarter.

Energy from Nature

The bioeconomy also contributes to the production of clean energy. By converting organic waste—such as manure, agricultural residues, and used cooking oil—into biogas, biomethane, and biofuels, it offers renewable energy solutions that can power homes, transport, and even entire communities. These alternatives significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help decrease dependence on fossil fuels.

More Than an Economy—A New Mindset

The circular bioeconomy represents a transformative approach to sustainability. It treats waste as a valuable resource, enhances soil health, supports biodiversity, and contributes to climate change mitigation. In addition, it fosters job creation, reduces production costs, and accelerates the development of eco-friendly products.
From the clothes we wear to the food we consume and the energy that powers our lives, the bioeconomy delivers practical, regenerative solutions—building a future that works in harmony with nature rather than against it.

Bioeconomy in Action

The circular bioeconomy represents a transformative approach to sustainability.
It treats waste as a valuable resource, enhances soil health, supports biodiversity, and contributes to climate change mitigation.

Bioeconomy in Action: Local Solutions for a Sustainable Future

Composting at Home: Veneto's Local Success

In Veneto, home composting is part of the regional waste strategy. By composting at home, residents can reduce waste, improve soil, and even lower waste fees.

The secret? A shady corner of your garden, the right mix of "green" (food scraps) and "brown" (dry leaves), and a little patience. After a few months, you will have rich, earthy compost ready for your plants—and you will be part of the circular economy from your own backyard.

Want to know more? A practical manual on recovering organic household waste is here for you

While industrial-scale anaerobic digestion and composting facilities handle the majority of organic fraction of municipal solid waste (OFMSW), home composting offers a decentralized, low-impact method of diverting biodegradable material from formal collection circuits. The practice is supported and regulated under regional and national waste policy, with quantifiable environmental and fiscal benefits. At a supra-municipal level, the Veneto Region **provides guidelines** and coordinates data collection through the ARPAV (Agenzia Regionale per la Prevenzione e Protezione Ambientale del Veneto),one of our WASTEREDUCE partners, which monitors the contribution of home composting to overall organic waste diversion rates.

Exploring Circular Solutions in the Brenta Area

Have you visited the Brenta area yet? If not, maybe it's time to do so.

Region in Focus

Exploring Circular Solutions in the Brenta Area

As part of the WASTEREDUCE project, partners took part in a two-day (4th and 5th of June) study visit to the Medio Brenta area in Veneto, Italy. Organized by ETIFOR in collaboration with ETRA, the visit showcased local best practices in circular economy and environmental protection. From electric waste collection along the river to forest-based water purification, the trip highlighted how integrated, nature-based solutions support sustainability at the local level.

Read on to discover the key takeaways from each stop on the journey.

Stop 1 — Meeting with operators of the electric waste collection vehicle in Bassano del Grappa

On the first stop of the first day, we met with ETRA's operators in Bassano del Grappa, who introduced us to the electric vehicle used for waste collection along the Natura 2000 area of the Brenta River. As part of the LIFE Brenta 2030 project, and facilitated by Etifor | Valuing Nature, another project partner, ETRA (the multiutility responsible for waste collection in the region) launched an environmental surveillance, monitoring, and waste collection service along the Middle Brenta river corridor. Using an electric vehicle, operators patrol the riverside and key recreational areas within the Natura 2000 site, identifying critical situations, addressing issues, and collecting any abandoned waste. Fifteen municipalities along the Brenta River collaborated to identify key areas, which are periodically monitored by environmental operators. Glad to have seen such an innovative way to collect waste!

Stop 2 — Visit to the waste management center in Bassano del Grappa

The morning of the first day concluded with a visit to the waste management center in Bassano del Grappa, operated by ETRA. This facility comprises a large plant dedicated to the treatment of organic waste, a pre-treatment facility for dry waste, and an intermunicipal center for the temporary storage of recyclable, special, and hazardous waste. After an introductory briefing on the processing of organic waste, the managing director of the facility guided us through the premises, explaining each phase of the process in detail. From the arrival of the trucks to the handling of organic waste, we learned about the various stages involved, including sorting, anaerobic digestion, and the production of both biogas and compost. It was fascinating to witness the complexity of such an advanced waste treatment system and the key role it plays in environmental sustainability!

Region in Focus

Exploring Circular Solutions in the Brenta Area

Stop 3 — **Visit to the water supply plant and caves in Oliero**

In the afternoon of the first day, the project partners traveled to the Oliero River, a tributary of the Brenta. In this area, they visited the water supply plant and the caves. The Oliero water supply plant was built in 1971 and completed in 1975. The construction project followed the path of a previous pumping station built during the First World War to serve the Italian troops deployed in the mountains to defend the plain. At that time seven intermediate steps were created to convey the water to the plateau. Today, with a single step of over 1000 m in height difference, the plant pumps the water from Oliero to the Col d'Astiago collection reservoir. In June 2018 the old reservoir was replaced by a new larger one and the plant was connected to the Grappa adductor with the aim of integrating, optimising and guaranteeing the water service.
After that, the partners ventured into the Oliero Caves - what an exciting experience! It was a wonderful way to discover the natural treasures of the area and immerse in nature. :)




Stop 4 — **Guided tour of the Forest Infiltration Area of Bosco Limite**

During the second day, project partners had the chance to visit the multifunctional forest of Bosco Limite. Just a few steps from the Brenta River, on a farm that had been used for corn cultivation for 20 years, there is now a thriving forest that produces clean water. Thanks to 1.5 km of channels, the forest infiltrates around one million cubic meters of water annually, improving both the quantity and quality of the area's water resources. Each year, Bosco Limite captures 50 tons of CO_2 – equivalent to the annual emissions of more than 30 cars! The 2,300 plants in Bosco Limite have transformed the land from a single-species cornfield to a diverse forest with over 15 different tree and shrub species, restoring the typical forest ecosystem of the Po Valley. Covering 25,000 square meters, the area has become home to more than 20 bird species. The forest also produces renewable energy and high-quality timber for sustainable construction.
Moreover, Bosco Limite serves as an outdoor classroom and a perfect space for planting a tree and making your personal contribution to nature!



Region in Focus

Exploring Circular Solutions in the Brenta Area

Stop 5 — **Drone flight in the pilot area and cleaning action along the Brenta river**

The two-day visit in the Medio Brenta area ended near the Camazzole lake, right along the Brenta River within the project's observation zone. Our partners rolled up their sleeves to clean the area - and, sadly, they found quite a bit of litter.
Thanks to the expertise of the University of Trieste and ARPAV teams, drone surveys were carried out to gather valuable data from above.
It was a fantastic way to conclude two days of full immersion in nature, helping us better understand the richness of natural resources in the Medio Brenta area!

News and Announcements

Workshops, conferences, meetings, events, public engagement... all of these are part of a project's life cycle. But we want it to be more than that – a seed for new ideas, a shift in mindset that continues even after the project ends. For us. For better future.

News

Wastereduce celebrated the International Day for Biological Diversity 2025

On Sunday, **May 25th**, IPTPO participated in the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity and Nature Protection Day in Croatia. The event was held at the Science and Education Centre Kontija, located within the Kontija Special Forest Vegetation Reserve near Poreč. Through interactive sessions for children and adults, the workshop will highlight the important connection between effective waste management and the protection of biodiversity.Read more here.

On **June 4th and 5th**, WASTEREDUCE partners took part in a two-day study visit organized by ETIFOR and ETRA to the Medio Brenta area in Veneto, Italy. Read more in this Newsletter and here.

Educational Excursion to Istria's Natura 2000 Sites
On **June 11th and 12th**, Natura Histrica organized an inspiring and dynamic educational excursion to pilot sites in Istria, that concluded with valuable partner networking. Read more here.

On June 17th, the results of the behavioral studies within the Wastereduce project were presented at the International Conference on Environmental Psychology, held in Vilnius, Lithuania. The conference brought together experts from around the world in behavioral, social, and environmental sciences to address issues related to current global environmental challenges. Marta Stragà from UNITS presented a poster dedicated to the results of the visitors' surveys collected in the project's pilot areas.

Eco Day at Lim Bay Promoted Marine Conservation and Local Awareness
As part of the WASTEREDUCE project the PI Natura Histrica, in collaboration with the Region of Istria, organized an Eco Day at Lim Bay on Saturday, **28 June 2025**.
The event included a variety of activities focused on the preservation of the marine environment, educating participants about the underwater and coastal ecosystems within Natura 2000 sites, and promoting the use of local seafood in everyday diets. Read more here.

Announcements

Upcoming Event: ETRA Moves Forward with WASTEREDUCE Action Plan
On 21 July, ETRA will host a key event marking an important step in the implementation of the WASTEREDUCE Action Plan. The day will begin with the signing of agreements with participating municipalities, followed by a workshop involving local municipalities and associations to coordinate the next phases of the plan. These activities aim to strengthen collaboration and ensure effective, community-driven implementation of circular waste practices. The event will conclude with a press conference to share outcomes and reinforce public engagement around the project's goals.

WASTE REDUCE
It's What We Choose!

We hope you enjoyed reading this edition of our newsletter!

Stay tuned

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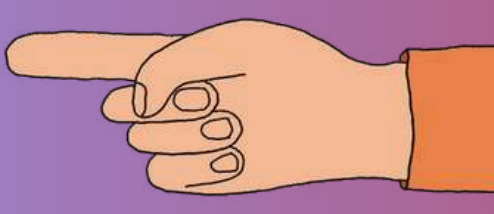

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