

Waste has a significant impact on the environment and human health, causing air, water and soil pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and losses of natural resources.

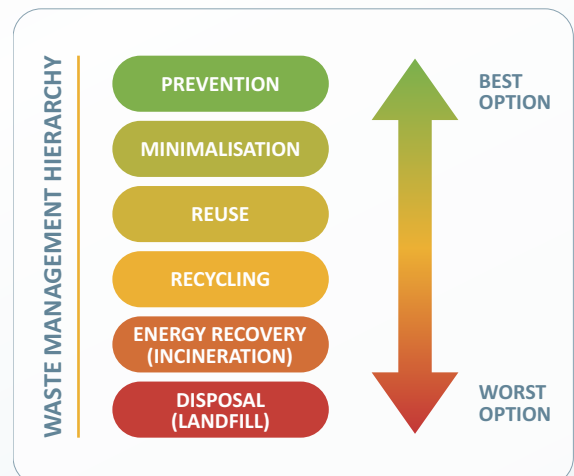
EU waste management policies aim to reduce the environmental and health impacts of waste, and to improve resource efficiency. The EU's approach is based on the "waste hierarchy" requiring the Member States to take specific measures to prioritize prevention, reuse and recycling above landfilling and incineration.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Serbia generated about 3.18 million tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) and over 45% was biowaste in 2022. Of the total generated waste, about 2.6 million tons were landfilled, and of that, about 1.3 million tons went to sanitary landfills.

Ten regional and two municipal sanitary landfills are in operation.

Many local self-governments (LSGs) in Serbia still dispose MSW on their own unsanitary landfills and there were 134 of those registered in 2022. Despite significant efforts of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, LSGs and some citizen groups in cleaning dumpsites, the existence of around 2690 dumpsites was recorded also in 2022.<sup>1</sup>



## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The waste generation in Serbia tends to grow, which also leads to a growing need for proper waste management. According to the waste management hierarchy, fully complying with EU requirements in Serbia, the following planning documents are adopted or being developed:

- 1 Waste Management Program for the period 2022–2031 with Action Plan
- 2 Circular Economy Development Program for the period 2022–2024
- 3 Waste Prevention Programme (in process)

These strategic documents define Serbia's waste management approach. Waste Management Program sets targets for management of various waste streams to be achieved in Serbia according to set deadlines. For example:

Indicator	Target	2020	2021	2022
Recycling rate of total generated MSW [%]	25% by 2025	15.6	16.7	17.7
Share of MSW landfilled of the total generated [%]	maximum of 10% by 2049	79.5	78	77.3
Share of MSW disposal in <b>unsanitary</b> landfills (of all landfilled waste) [%]	0% by 2034	76	64	47.3
Share of MSW disposal in <b>sanitary</b> landfills (of all landfilled waste) [%]	100% by 2034	24	36	52.6
Share of biodegradable MSW landfilled (of produced in 2008) [%]	75% by 2028	88.5	89	93

Source: Serbian EPA

<sup>1</sup> Source: Serbian Environmental Protection Agency (Serbian EPA)

## TOWARDS A RECYCLING SOCIETY

The goal is to achieve an improved municipal waste management system through an increased recycling rate, reduced disposal of biodegradable waste in landfills and reduced disposal of waste in unsanitary landfills in Serbia. The Waste Management Program foresees a stepwise approach in establishing the required infrastructure in 26 regions, emphasizing reduction of waste going to landfills through separation, reuse and recycling.

### INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNED FOR MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT

	High density urban Region – Belgrade	Regions with large conurbations – Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac	Other Regions
1 <sup>st</sup> Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment for waste collection to ensure 100% collection coverage.</li> <li>• Transfer stations (where applicable).</li> <li>• Source separation of recyclables (initially 2-bin, then developing further).</li> <li>• Secondary separation at regional level.</li> <li>• Home composting 30%.</li> <li>• Source separation of green waste and municipal composting.</li> <li>• Amenity sites (bulky waste, WEEE, hazardous waste, etc.).</li> <li>• Fully engineered sanitary landfill.</li> <li>• Closure of existing landfills (cease of operations, gate, and fence).</li> <li>• Monitoring and reporting equipment.</li> </ul>		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste to Energy.</li> <li>• Further development of source separation.</li> <li>• Home composting expansion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refuse Derived Fuel production.</li> <li>• Further development of source separation.</li> <li>• Home composting expansion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further development of source separation.</li> <li>• Home composting expansion.</li> <li>• Separate collection and biological treatment.</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further separate collection and biological treatment of biodegradable waste.</li> <li>• Home composting expansion.</li> <li>• Recultivation of closed non-sanitary landfills.</li> </ul>		

Serbia is in the process of introducing and upgrading regional waste management systems. Investment activities are ongoing or being planned in more than 20 regions. These changes will improve the quality of the environment, but will also create opportunities for green jobs.

## NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING WASTE SECTOR

In order to achieve proper waste management in Serbia, investments of approximately EUR 1.3 billion (2021 price level) are estimated to be necessary. Although good progress has been made, more time is still needed to mobilize resources for investment and to develop institutional capacity. During negotiations, in order to avoid excess burdens on the country's inhabitants, the goal to establish an environmentally sound waste management system as soon as possible will need to be balanced with the realistically available resources.

**The implementation of EU environmental standards is essential to an improved quality of life for Serbian citizens. Local self-governments, civil society organizations and citizens can make a big, positive impact through improving waste management, in particular, regarding separation and proper disposal of waste.**

