



# Incentivizing Separation at the Source: Successful Strategies for Organic Waste

September 2024



**RECYCLE  
ORGANICS**

Reducing Methane  
From Waste



# Report launched March 2024



[Recycleorganics.org](https://recycleorganics.org)



## INCENTIVES FOR ORGANIC WASTE SOURCE SEPARATION

Successful Strategies for Municipalities

MARCH, 2024

- ❖ Successful OWM programs at the municipal level.
- ❖ Programs running between 4 – 20 years.
- ❖ Interviews with representatives from the municipal governments.

# Economic incentives



- ❖ Reduction of fees
- ❖ Free services for OWM
- ❖ Sanctions and penalties
- ❖ Giving monetary value to organic waste



Source: avoided costs in transportation, and/or of in disposal

# Free services and penalties

## Ciudad de Buenos Aires (Argentina)

- **Free collection system** for commercial generators (mainly restaurants).
- Organic waste collection route from **stationary reception points**.
- **Registration process** and **technical visit** to validate correct waste separation.

## Cajicá (Colombia)

- **Educational punishment** for residents (sweeping central town square, training on OWM, or providing training to other residents).
  - Required increased monitoring capacity; not very successful.
- **Penalty fees** in apartment complexes and community boards.

# Economic incentives



- ❖ Reduction of fees
- ❖ Free services for OWM
- ❖ Sanctions and penalties
- ❖ **Giving monetary value to organic waste**



Source: avoided costs in transportation, and/or final disposal



For every 5kg of organic waste deposited, citizens receive 1 Pila Verde (USD 0.2) .

# ORGANIC WASTE SOCIAL CURRENCY: PILA VERDE (SANTIAGO, BRAZIL)

Citizens drop off their organic waste at any of the 9 voluntary collection points (PEVs) across the city.



These "pila" bills can be exchanged at local producer fairs for various items.

The locally-grown fruits and vegetables are sold in pila and consumed within the community, completing the sustainable cycle.

Market farmers and rural producers use "pila" to purchase organic fertilizer and seedlings.

The fertilizer is then used in local production processes



# Recognizing participants



**Congratulatory tags or stickers on waste bins**



**Frequent user cards**



**Apps to award virtual points**



**Annual contests and award ceremonies**

- Early stages
- Communities with strong social importance to how they are perceived.
- Contribute to waste generation





# Key messages: Recognizing participants



- ✓ Long-standing programs:
  - benefit from innovations in rewarding participants or
  - penalizing them when inadequately separating waste
  
- ✓ Rewards for best practices
  - better results when used sporadically
  - add new participants
  - enhance ongoing participation
  
- ✓ Early stages requires in person efforts



# Door-to-door awareness teams

- Disseminating information, printed materials, and online tools
- Distributing equipment
  - ✓ for home composting activities
  - ✓ bins
  - ✓ additives
- Conducting inspections along collection routes



# Door-to-door awareness teams



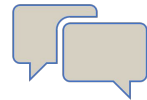
Approachable  
outreach vehicles



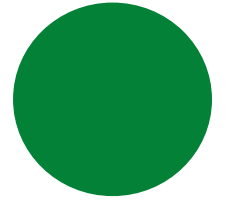
Providing  
information for  
other municipal  
services



Specialized staff by  
generator type and  
profile



**Outsourcing  
awareness and  
communication**



# Pilots: collecting preliminary information



- ✓ Incentive testing
- ✓ Interviews and focal groups
- ✓ Selection/design of methods and bins



# Participation in voluntary initiatives



## Commercial generators:

□ Not keen to partake in voluntary OWM programs



Need to adjust the logistics (areas for waste separation, aligning operation-collection schedule).



High participation linked to economic incentives.



Exception: Upcoming mandatory source separation policies.

# Participation in voluntary initiatives



## Residential generators



Generating a sense of community



Linking with community gardens and orchards



Providing several reception points alternatives options

- Farmers markets
- Neighborhood reception points
- Community composters



# Key Takeaways



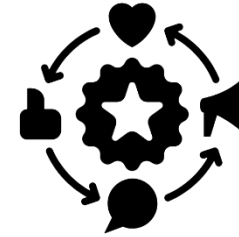
## **Economic incentives show good results for all generators**

These incentives can promote participation of commercial waste generators in particular and have a quick and direct impact on shifting behavior.



## **Incentive tools by program stage**

Early stages require more in-person efforts, while long-standing programs benefit from innovations in rewarding/penalizing participants.



## **Actively engage with participants to achieve behavioral change**

Promote continuous engagement, awareness creation, and the use of adequate tools like social media to sustain participation.



## **Successful OWM programs already exist in small municipalities**

Existing initiatives have proven to have a positive effect on changing socioeconomic behavior and can be replicated across the global south.



# RECYCLE ORGANICS

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From Waste



[www.recycleorganics.org/](http://www.recycleorganics.org/)

Strategic Partners:



This project was undertaken with the financial support of:  
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Environment and  
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et  
Changement climatique Canada



# Avoided costs from final disposal



In 2023:

- The municipality composted 190 tons of organic waste (6% of the total domestic organic waste generated).
- Approximately 14,000 Pila Verde notes in circulation.
- Financial viability linked to high transportation and disposal costs (USD 100.9 per ton).

Table 1. Primary analysis of the economic data of Pila Verde.

Year	Investment	Avoided costs on waste disposal	Savings
2020	USD \$991.01	USD \$3,393.75	USD \$2,399.74
2021	USD \$1,661.47	USD \$1,873.76	USD \$232.46
2022	USD \$5,974.23	USD \$16,062	USD \$10,087.77
2023	USD \$6,350	USD \$20,207.50	USD \$13,862.50

Source: Adapted by RO, based on data provided by the Municipal Environmental Department of Santiago.



# INCENTIVES FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Environmental Awards or Recognition



Grenada's Environmentally Friendly  
Schools Initiative



"Ecological Blue Flag"  
(Bandera Azul Ecológica)

# Focus on organic waste within the EFSI



- ❖ Observance of international/local sector days and the composting awareness week.
  - ✓ Schools can observe the day by gifting a composter to another institution or,
  - ✓ Adopting a farmer and have him/her guide the school on starting and maintaining a composting system.
- ❖ Point allocation:
  - ✓ Composting initiatives and waste diversion award 30 points each which is the second highest amount of points awarded for an activity.
  - ✓ Additionally, points are added if the surrounding community or the parent-teacher association is involved in the project (20 points).
  - ✓ As it is portrayed by these examples, many of the guidelines on activities to develop have been set with the objective of broadening the impact of the EFSI to the surrounding communities.

# Ministry and other stakeholder support has helped in the growth in participation in the EFSI

- ❖ Increased participation: Commencing with just **nine participating schools in 2002**, the program has since expanded, reaching a notable milestone in **2020 with a total of 56 registered schools** actively involved.
- ❖ **100% participation of schools** in Carriacou (all eight schools –2 secondary and 6 primary-).
- ❖ **100% of food waste diverted towards animal feed** in primary schools in the island of Carriacou.
- ❖ **34 composting projects developed** in schools.



# Social media can be an excellent tool to reach broader audiences

**COMPOSTAJE**  
Una tendencia para combatir el Cambio Climático

**EN CHILE**  
UNA PERSONA GENERA 1.25 KILOS DE BASURA

**¿QUÉ ES EL COMPOSTAJE?**  
Es el proceso de transformación de la materia orgánica en abono natural.

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**Según el Informe del Banco Mundial "What a Waste 2.0", 2018**

Chile G.A.Z.

5.5% de las ciudades en compostaje

Asesoramiento recíproco de 120,000 toneladas de residuos orgánicos de los que se obtienen 15,000 a 20,000 toneladas de compost por año.

Entrevista **CAMILA PEÑALOZA**  
Cocinera y fundadora de @plantitas

**Aumentan iniciativas ciudadanas que impulsan el reciclaje de orgánicos**

80% de la basura generada en los hogares chilenos corresponde a residuos orgánicos que el Estado genera en residuos sólidos antes que mostrar mayor potencial de aprovechamiento global en 20 años más que el Estado de Chile (80% equivalente al 70% de las emisiones de Gases de Efecto Invernadero del sector).

**Proyecto impulsado por el Programa Reciclo Orgánicos:**

- Campaña:** Santa Cruz, Talca, Temuco, Valdivia, Antofagasta, Pudahuel, Concepción, Puerto Montt, La Serena, San Bernardo, Magenta y Iquique.
- Campaña de sensibilización:** Pina, La Higuera y Pudahuel.
- Talleres e iniciativas:** Maipo y Esmeraldas.

**Beneficio de reducir residuos orgánicos en el hogar:**

- Reducción del 30% al 50% de los desperdicios que terminan en la basura y en consecuencia, disminución de la basura que termina en rellenos sanitarios.
- Ahorro de dinero al reducir la emisión de gases de efecto invernadero que se genera en los rellenos sanitarios.
- Como resultado del proceso del compostaje y el compostaje obtenido se puede utilizar.
- Señala de mejor conexión con la tierra y participación al saber que está ayudando al planeta.

**La descomposición de orgánicos en rellenos sanitarios puede demorar 12 años.**

**5.000 establecimientos educacionales contarán con composteras al 2030.**

**Compostar reduce en más de un 50% la basura domiciliar.**

**Revisa nuestro último webinar sobre biogestión!**

**Belize Solid Waste Management Authority**  
31 de julio a la 1:43 p.m.

The Belize Solid Waste Management Authority is encouraging you to transform your organic waste into valuable compost with the Belize Home Composting Program, launching the week of August 26, 2024. This exciting initiative aims to reduce methane emissions and promote sustainable waste management practices in our community.

Supported by Recycle Organics and strategic partners including CCAP, #ImplementaSur, Recycle Organics and Environment and Climate Change, this program offers the perfect opportunity to make a positive environmental impact right from your home. Don't miss out on the launch! Scan the QR code on the flyer to learn more and get started. \*click on the link below to sign up.\*: [https://docs.google.com/\\_/1KP8bRWFhdo1K9Bf.../viewform...](https://docs.google.com/_/1KP8bRWFhdo1K9Bf.../viewform...)

**BELIZE HOME COMPOSTING PROGRAM**  
Transforming Organic Waste into Compost

Week of August 26 Launch of the New Program!

**RECYCLE ORGANICS** STRATEGIC PARTNERS: CCAP, #ImplementaSur, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada

Beltran Duhart y 15 personas más 22 veces compartido

Recycle Organics invites you to join the

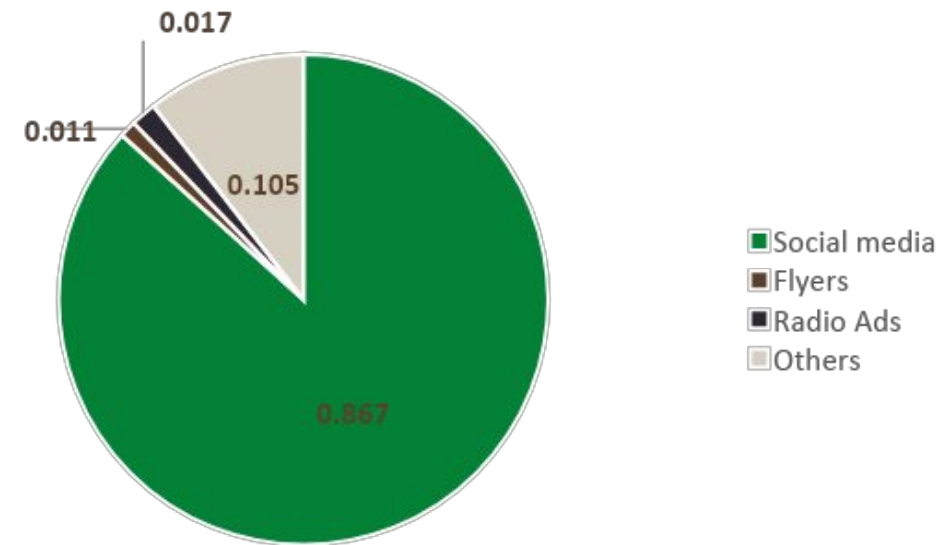
**SAINT LUCIA HOME COMPOSTING PROGRAM**  
Transform your organic waste into compost!

Week of September 23th Join our Home Composting Program! More details coming soon!

**RECYCLE ORGANICS** This project was undertaken with the financial support of Environment and Climate Change Canada

Scan the QR code to register Don't miss the chance to be part of this initiative!

How did you hear about the program?





# Key Takeaways

- **Economic incentives:** Economic incentives work for all users and can promote participation of commercial waste generators in particular and they have a quick and direct impact on shifting behavior.
- **Innovations - social currency and organic waste:** Nevertheless, implementing those in the absence of existing fees/tariffs is a common challenge. Other tools can be set up to increase voluntary participation, while fee systems are put in place such as strategies to provide monetary value to organic waste.
  - For example, the “Pila Verde” social currency used in the markets of the municipality of Santiago (Brazil) shows an innovative initiative with economic incentives targeting several municipal actors such as waste generators and farmers and creates a local currency around organic waste.
- **Pilot programs to test and design incentives:** The report also highlights the importance of pilot programs in gathering initial insights on general perception and misconceptions of the population and to support the design of targeted and effective messaging. It also supports efforts to test incentives and design wastebins or select home composting technologies to use when upscaling the programs.
- **Awareness teams and building a sense of community:** Establishing door-to-door efforts and implementing soft incentives and awards for participants are pivotal to disseminate programs during the initial stages of implementation. Creating initiatives that promote a sense of community is also key to creating a sense of ownership amongst generators.
- **Outsourcing awareness and communications:** Outsourcing awareness and outreach components were identified as a common and crucial approach for small municipalities that do not have the capacity or available personnel to focus on these topics.
- **Recognizing participants:** Other types of incentives such as congratulatory tags and rewards recognizing best practices in source separation show better results when used sporadically to add new participants and enhance ongoing participation.
  - For example, the Environmentally Friendly Schools Initiative (EFSI) in Grenada promotes organic waste management not only in schools but also in surrounding communities as well. The EFSI has maintained regular annual participation across school districts that want to sustain their “golden award status” and promote themselves as local leaders within their communities.
- **Incentive tools by stage:** Early stages of OWM programs might require more in-person efforts, while long-standing programs benefit from innovations in rewarding participants or penalizing them when inadequately separating their waste.
- **Online tools and AI:** The use of online tools and AI can support the awareness team’s work, but it is important to highlight that they cannot replace it. AI has been used in OWM programs as chatbots that can answer questions. They also support the development of contests designed to promote participation, where they can register participants, send questions to award points, automatically keep track of allocated points, and rank winners.
- **Successful OWM programs already exist in small municipalities:** Case studies presented have proven to have a positive effect on changing socioeconomic behavior and can be replicated across other countries around the globe.