Terminology glossary and useful links

Training #3: Awareness raising and community engagement

Module 1

Published in April 2026

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Co-funded by the European Union

Co-funded by the European Union (Grant n°.101113011) Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or REA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Term	Explanation
Animal by-product (ABP)	Materials of animal origin that are not intended for human consumption (e.g. slaughter residues, catering waste containing animal products). They are strictly regulated in the EU because they can pose risks to human and animal health and must be treated appropriately before reuse or disposal.
Anaerobic digestion (AD)	A biological process in which microorganisms break down bio-waste in the absence of oxygen. This process produces biogas (a renewable energy source mainly composed of methane) and digestate, a nutrient-rich material that can be used as fertiliser or soil improver.
Bio-methane	A high-quality renewable gas obtained by upgrading biogas (removing CO_2 and impurities). It can be injected into the natural gas grid or used as a fuel for transport and energy production.
Bio-waste	Biodegradable waste from gardens, parks, households, restaurants and food processing (e.g. food scraps, peels, coffee grounds, garden clippings). It is a key resource in the circular economy because it can be transformed into compost, fertiliser and energy.
Carbon sequestration	The process of capturing and storing carbon dioxide (CO_2) from the atmosphere. In the context of bio-waste, this mainly occurs through the application of compost or organic matter to soils, increasing soil carbon storage and helping mitigate climate change.
Component Material Categories (CMC)	Categories defined under the EU Fertilising Products Regulation that specify which input materials (e.g. compost, digestate, by-products) are allowed in fertilising products. They ensure safety, traceability and environmental protection.
Composting	An aerobic (oxygen-based) biological process in which microorganisms decompose bio-waste into a stable, humus-like material called compost. Compost improves soil structure, water retention and nutrient availability.
Digestate	The residual material produced after anaerobic digestion. It contains nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus and can be used as fertiliser or soil improver after appropriate treatment and quality control.
EUSO	The European Soil Observatory, an EU initiative that collects and analyses data on soil health to support policy-making and sustainable land management.
Fertiliser	A natural or synthetic substance that supplies essential nutrients (such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) to plants, improving their growth, yield and overall health.
Food waste	Food that is discarded or lost at any stage of the food supply chain, including production, processing, retail and consumption. Reducing food waste is a major environmental and economic priority in the EU.
Green waste	Plant-based waste from gardens and parks, such as grass cuttings, leaves, branches and flowers. It is typically easy

	to compost and is an important input for high-quality compost production.
Humic substances	Complex organic compounds formed during the decomposition of organic matter. They play a key role in soil fertility by improving nutrient retention, soil structure and microbial activity.
Hygienisation	A treatment process, often involving heat, used to reduce or eliminate pathogens (harmful microorganisms) in bio-waste. It is essential for ensuring that compost and digestate are safe to use.
Impurities	Non-biodegradable materials (such as plastics, metals and glass) present in bio-waste. High levels of impurities reduce the quality of compost and digestate and can limit their use in agriculture.
MBT (Mechanical Biological Treatment)	A treatment process for mixed waste combining mechanical sorting and biological treatment. The output is often contaminated and generally unsuitable for use as a soil improver.
Organic matter	The biodegradable fraction of waste or soil, composed of plant and animal residues. It is essential for soil health, as it improves structure, water retention and nutrient cycling.
Organic waste	A general term often used interchangeably with bio-waste. In some contexts, it may also include non-biodegradable organic materials, so the definition can vary depending on usage.
Perceived behavioural control (PBC)	A concept from behavioural science referring to how easy or difficult individuals believe it is to perform a certain behaviour (e.g. separating bio-waste). It strongly influences participation in waste collection systems.
Product Function Categories (PFC)	Categories under the EU Fertilising Products Regulation that define the function of a product (e.g. fertiliser, soil improver, growing medium), ensuring clarity for users and regulators.
Quality assurance (QA)	A set of planned and systematic activities implemented to ensure that products and processes consistently meet defined quality standards (e.g. compost certification schemes).
Quality control (QC)	Operational techniques and checks used to verify that a product meets specific requirements, such as laboratory testing or visual inspection.
SOC (Soil Organic Carbon)	The carbon component of organic matter in soil. It is a key indicator of soil health and plays an important role in fertility, water retention and climate regulation.