Bin2Bean

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Practice abstract 12

Policy Guidelines and Roadmaps
EU Legal Framework

*In Europe, the shift toward a **circular economy** is well underway: waste is sorted, and recycled, bio-waste is separated, polluters are held accountable, and landfilling drastically cut. This transformation is driven by an evolving EU **legal framework and ambitious environmental targets**.*

How the legal framework supports PAYT policies

The **EU Waste Framework Directive** (2008/98/EC), adopted in 2008, lays the foundation for waste management across Member States. It defines key concepts, promotes protection of human health and the environment, introduces the waste hierarchy, and supports the transition to a circular economy. It also clarifies when waste becomes a secondary raw material. These principles underpin initiatives such as Bin2Bean, which tests innovative charging and bio-waste valorisation systems.

A central principle is the **polluter-pays principle**, introduced by the OECD in 1972 and later embedded in EU law. It requires those responsible for pollution to cover its environmental costs. PAYT systems directly apply this principle by linking waste fees to individual behaviour, an approach explored in Bin2Bean Living Labs.

EU targets reinforce this direction: **by 2035, at least 65% of municipal waste must be recycled or prepared for reuse**. Bio-waste is crucial in this transition. Since the end of 2023, it must be collected separately, and from 2027 only separately collected bio-waste will count toward recycling targets.

Recent reforms further strengthen ambition. A 2025 amendment introduced binding food waste reduction targets for 2030. The revised **Landfill Directive** limits landfill to 10% of municipal waste by 2035 and bans landfilling recyclable waste from 2030. To achieve these goals, Member States are encouraged to use economic tools such as PAYT, aligning regulation with incentives and supporting circular economy implementation.

Project partners

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