Bin2Bean

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Practice abstract 14

How is Hamburg managing biowaste?

*The **Living Labs of Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Egaleo** serve as inspiration and experimental testbeds for the Bin2Bean project. They help explore how different cities address waste system challenges and implement solutions for organic waste recycling.*
This abstract is specifically dedicated to Hamburg Living Lab.

Germany's Waste Management

Germany's waste framework has evolved from the 1972 Waste Disposal Act to the current Circular Economy Act, aligned with EU law since 2012. Municipalities are responsible for household waste and define rules on participation, collection, and service use. The system is decentralised, requires cost-covering fees, and allows differentiated pricing such as PAYT schemes and incentives for home composting.

Hamburg Living Lab case

In Hamburg, waste is managed by Stadtreinigung Hamburg (SRH), serving about one million households. Collection is mainly door-to-door with separate streams for residual waste, paper, packaging, and bio-waste; alternatives include bags or underground containers where space is limited. Twelve recycling centres complement the system. Bio-waste collection, introduced in the 1980s and mandatory since 1994, has improved over time, yet about 32% of compostable waste still ends up in residual waste. Garden owners may opt out if composting at home. Underground systems often face contamination due to low social control. Organic waste is treated at Kompostwerk Bützberg, producing energy and compost.

Hamburg applies a PAYT-based fee system linked to container size and collection frequency. Bio-waste bins are significantly cheaper than residual ones, while paper collection is free. A basic monthly fee applies, with total annual waste revenues reflecting broad system coverage.

Within Bin2Bean, activities involved UFS sites and thousands of users, combining surveys, workshops, and practical tools such as compost samples, biobags, and communication materials to improve waste quality. Monitoring solutions and local engagement events further supported cleaner organic waste collection.

Project partners

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