

Audit Report 6/2022

Recycling: Are Municipalities effective in managing municipal solid waste recycling?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The audit evaluated the efficiency and effectiveness of Local Government Organizations (LGOs) in implementing the recycling programs within the municipal solid waste stream.

The LGOs audited were those of Vari-Voula-Vouliagmeni, Grevena, Corinthos, Larissa and Pavlos Melas (in Thessaloniki region).

Audit conclusions:

I. Weaknesses were detected in the preparation of sound waste prevention and product re-use plans and activities, at a local level.

II. Serious deficiencies were detected in their organizational capacities and in the availability of the necessary technical infrastructure in a resource-efficient manner so that to ensure the implementation of the recycling schemes. At the same time, the cost of managing waste recycling is increasing over time.

III. Little progress has been made in achieving the targets set by the Municipalities in their Local Waste Management Plans for waste prevention and minimization, product re-use, waste recycling management and finally the drastic reduction of the total amount of waste generated and properly disposed, with the corresponding performance indicators being significantly low.

IV. The level of implementation of the accompanying supporting measures for recycling (information campaigns about proper solid waste management and recycling and awareness actions of citizens on segregation of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste) remains very low; at the same time financial instruments such as recycling incentives and charges (pay-as-you-throw and deposit refund schemes) to incentivize waste recycling and divert waste from landfills toward recycling are not applied.

V. The LGOs have limited and problematic cooperation with the stakeholders engaged to the municipal solid waste recycling, such as the Hellenic Recycling Agency, the Hellenic Recovery Recycling Corporation and the Ministry of Environment and Energy.