

WASTE PREVENTION IN ITALY – FEDERAMBIENTE INITIATIVES

Since the issuing of the first national framework law on waste (Legislative decree 22/97 transposing EU directive framework on waste), awareness and environmental consciousness have grown up with positive effects on waste management in Italy.

Since 2002, Federambiente, the Italian Federation of Public Environmental Services, put into action a series of projects which today are giving it a leading role at national level on the issue of waste prevention.

In particular, the *online national Database on waste prevention and minimization* (www.federambiente.it/prevenzione) has become operational since 2004 with the aim to improve the awareness on waste prevention and to disseminate adequate information on best and innovative practices in waste management;

in November 2006 Federambiente and the National Waste Observatory (Osservatorio Nazionale Rifiuti), technical body of Environmental Ministry, published the first *National guidelines on municipal waste prevention*;

in 2008 co-operation with Legambiente, main Italian environmental NGO, began with a series of itinerant technical seminars *“Towards the national waste prevention programme: starting from local experiences”*;

in 2008 Federambiente together with the National Waste Observatory, Rifiuti21Network, Legambiente, CNI Unesco and other national and local partners, promoted the very first national campaign on waste prevention launching the first Italian edition of the European Waste Reduction Week (SERD 2008, pilot edition), promoted by ACR+ (www.acrplus.org) and today it's going to organise the 2009 national official edition;

at the beginning of 2009 Federambiente resumed its co-operation with the National Waste Observatory with a twofold purpose: on the one hand, the updating of the *“National guidelines on municipal waste prevention”*, on the other hand the inception of technical-cognitive works in view of the organization of the coming National Prevention Programme;

in 2009 Federambiente is participating to the European stakeholder consultation held by the European Commission on the guidelines on waste prevention programmes according to the revised waste framework directive, including best practices.

In 2009 Federambiente is organizing and coordinating the first official edition of the European Week for Waste Reduction (21-29 November 2009) along with the National Waste Observatory, Province of Turin, Waste Network 21, Italian National Commission for UNESCO, AICA, Legambiente, ERICA Soc. Eco by City. Within the *“Week”*, on the 25th of November, Federambiente, the National Waste Observatory and Legambiente organise the national Conference on *“Building the National Prevention Programme”* with the participation of main stakeholder at national level.

NATIONAL GUIDELINES ON PREVENTION AND MINIMIZATION OF MUNICIPAL WASTE

In 2006, Federambiente together with the National Waste Observatory published the first "*National guidelines on prevention and minimization of municipal waste*", dedicated to administrators and managers of local public environmental services. The guidelines are useful operational guide to design and initiate policies and actions to prevent waste. The work is based on an analysis of best practices collected in the Federambiente database on waste prevention and minimization.

The objective of the Guidelines is to provide, on the one hand, a "modeling" of successful experiences for the purpose of their replicability in other territories and, on the other, a manual for the use of a set of tools (regulatory, economic, volunteers) which are already available at various territorial levels (national, regional, provincial and municipal) for the implementation of prevention policies and measures.

The guidelines, in particular, contain a handbook of preventive actions for specific flow of goods:

- boxes for fruit and vegetables;
- primary packaging for liquid food,
- baby disposable diapers,
- disposable grocery;
- shopping bags,
- food (remains of meals and food still edible);
- containers for liquid and detergents;
- durables (household appliances and electrical and electronic equipment for home or office);
- bulky goods,
- medicines,
- used clothing,
- paper.

Possible prevention and minimization measures, accompanied by a first set of useful and operational information, are presented for each flow divided into the following sections:

- amounts of goods put on the market and amount of waste produced out of them;
- prevention / minimization solutions applicable to the specific good/waste flow;
- contexts of application of preventive measures,
- promoters and individuals to be engaged to help implement the action;
- possible tools be implemented;
- benefits in terms of potential outcomes of prevention and / or minimization;
- criticality that may be encountered in the implementation of the proposed action,
- examples of best practices (drawn from the Federambiente database).

FEDERAMBIENTE DATABASE ON WASTE PREVENTION AND MINIMIZATION

The online Database on waste prevention and minimization brings together the best experiences on this issue. Operating since 2004, it can be consulted at www.federambiente.it/prevenzione, it contains about 130 practical experiences of waste prevention and minimization carried out in Italy by local authorities, environmental health services and private operators and it is divided both into sections and by topic. The section called “*toolbox*” contains the continuously updated and enriched tools allowing the implementation of waste prevention policies and actions at European, national, regional, provincial and local level:

- regulatory and legislative measures (directives, laws, resolutions, regulations, etc);
- economical tools divided into incentives and disincentives (funds and eco-tax system);
- purposive tools (contracts and/or programme agreements, territorial deals, purposive agreements, etc).

The “*Public initiatives*” section contains the initiatives promoted by local authorities (regions and local bodies), by public environmental health companies, by environmental and consumers associations. A special subsection is dedicated to the *Green Public Procurement* (GPP) experiences. The “*Private initiatives*” section contains process and product/service innovations implemented by industrial, artisan and service companies in order to limit waste production.

Updating and the last news on prevention and minimization are published in a *newsletter* sent to all the registered members of the Database and to Federambiente associates.

At the time of its publication on the Federambiente site, in February 2004, the Database contained 34 prevention experiences. Today (at the end of 2008) it contains:

- 164 tools in the toolbox;
- 81 public initiatives;
- 17 GPP initiatives;
- 31 private initiatives;
- 165 downloadable files (database documents).

A new and restyled version of Federambiente prevention database and web site is being published within Federambiente Internet site in these very days.

Most of the data filed in the Database are related to waste prevention and minimization experiences organized by public authorities (regions, ATO, provinces, municipalities), public environmental utilities and third sector parties who often set the initiatives in motion in co-operation with and involving other local partners (other bodies and public companies, local productive and commercial businesses ...).

Generally speaking, regions and local bodies have specific and strategic competence on the issue of waste prevention and minimization: they are in fact delegated, under law decree 152/06, to plan and manage the waste cycle abiding by the community action hierarchy (prevention, recovery and disposal). Moreover, regions are called to elaborate specific plans for packaging and packaging waste prevention and management, and also waste reduction plans for the biodegradable fraction to be landfilled under law decree 36/2003.

On the basis of the national regulatory provisions, new regional and provincial plans deal with the waste prevention and minimization issue with a different degree of detail and elaboration, envisaging both the measures to be undertaken and the applicative tools. Among the most scrupulous authorities on the issue of waste prevention, we can mention the regions of Piedmont, Tuscany, Marches, Puglia and the provinces of Asti, Turin, Trento, Bolzano, Cremona, Mantua, Bergamo, Ferrara, Florence and the ATO2 of Lucca. Analysing the registered cases, one realizes that the tools used are often of a voluntary and contractual type (territorial deals and protocol agreements with the local industrial and/or commercial system), in some cases of a communicative type (information and awareness campaigns addressed to the citizens), in others of a fiscal and economical type (implementation of taxes and rates, incentives and financing). With reference to the latter, we mention some experiences, of both prevention and minimization, such as the ones realized by the Veneto and Abruzzo regions, who manage the regional eco-tax on disposal so that it is serviceable to waste stabilization and recovery; or the Cremona province, where disposal plant (landfill and incinerator) tariff is different according to the amount of residual waste per capita disposed of by each single municipality; and the experiences of the Mantua and Varese provinces, who proportion the provincial additional tax (ex Law Decree 504/92) according to the waste production trend registered in their municipalities.

At operational level, from the analysis of the Database experiences it often emerges a joint use of different tools which, through the activation of synergies among the various actors, gives a stronger efficacy to the actions undertaken.

In the light of the filed cases, we can note that the main experiences on the waste prevention issue in Italy have been carried out just by local public authorities – prominent figures of the Federambiente Database.

Here below, are some experiences from the Database, distinguished according to the type of waste prevention action: the “best practices” picked among the recorded ones.

Reduction of mineral water packaging waste

Of great relevance, and ever more on the increase, are local initiatives aiming at reducing mineral water packaging waste and at restoring the use of tap water. The municipality of Venice, together with the Patriarchate and in co-operation with the local water company, is promoting the use of tap water with the slogan “*Imbrocciamola*” and two outstanding testimonials (the Mayor, Mr. Cacciari, and the actor, Marco Paolini). The reference is to the homonymous campaign dedicated to the use of water in public businesses launched by the magazine *Altreconomia* and *Legambiente*. Again on tap water promotion, we can mention the information and awareness campaigns launched by the municipalities of Alba and Florence “*Acquartiere4*”. Tap water dispensers have been installed in the offices of the Florence municipality and bottled water has been forbidden. The target: one million less bottles in four years. The Marches region placed dispensers of treated tap water in its offices. The province of Trento promoted a campaign for the use of tap water and the reduction of plastic packaging: “*Apri il rubinetto e chiudi con la plastica*”. The province of Ferrara installed cooling dispensers linked to the main water system to supply safe drinking water to schools, cultural clubs, senior citizens’ centres, school refectories and reception homes. The HERA Group promoted “*Hera20*”, an initiative addressed to its over 6,000 employees, with the aim of stimulating and promoting the use of tap water on its premises, gradually eliminating plastic bottles from coffee bars, canteens and offices.

Eco-sustainable shopping: reduction of packaging waste and much more

There are a lot of initiatives promoting eco-sustainable shopping. Regions are becoming promoters of agreements with production and commercial distribution actors. In the Database we can find the case of Piedmont, which, in accord with large-scale distribution and manufacturers, set up a project for the loose sale of detergents and for the enhancement of citizens' awareness towards a more eco-sustainable consumption. But also Tuscany, Latium and Umbria are going the same way. The province of Mantua involved large-scale distribution for the tap sale of detergents. With its initiative *"Sconsigli per gli acquisti"*, the province of Ferrara took actions to prevent the production of packaging waste, disposable tableware, unsold foodstuff. The province of Bolzano, the first one in Italy, created an ecological label to be granted to retail food and general stores which, both in their offers and information to customers and in their staff training, comply with a series of environmental criteria, among which waste reduction. The municipality of Reggio Emilia, with its project *"La spesa verde"*, grants an ecological quality label to retail outlets belonging, in this case, only to large-scale distribution.

In large-scale distribution, from the supply point of view, we can mention the initiatives of COOP and those of SMA *"Pesarisparmio"* and *"Ecopoint"* CRAI for the sale of loose products, food or otherwise, by means of automatic dispensers.

Reduction of WEEE

Another area of intervention concerns electrical and electronic goods. In Brescia, Aprica Spa (an A2A Group company), with its project *"Lazzaro"* and thanks to the contribution of the city's high school students, recovers and redistributes used PCs. In Rome the Fondazione Mondo Digitale is involved in the recovery of discarded business personal computers: they are regenerated by the students with a free software and then sent to senior citizens social centres. In Rome again, the cooperative Binario Etico regenerates discarded PCs by means of the GNU/Linux operating system. Likewise, the municipality of Ferrara, with its project *"tRiciclo PC con Linux"*, which reconditions personal computers discarded by its own offices, recovers and donates them to third sector bodies and associations. Worthy of mention is the *"Telefono Casa"* project for the collection and recovery of disused mobiles by a network of social cooperatives in the Treviso province and in Veneto. These activities finance recovery and social integration projects.

Reduction of food waste and biodegradable waste

A number of prevention initiatives have positive repercussions also on social issues, particularly those aiming at food and foodstuff recovery. We are speaking of still edible, but no longer saleable, food and products coming from agricultural and food chains, shops, canteens and restaurants. Normally meant for disposal, they are sent instead to non-profit bodies and associations managing soup-kitchens, as provided for by Law 155/03 (the so-called Law of the Good Samaritan). This is the kind of project formulated by the municipality of Rome, *"Roma non spreca"*, which gave also rise to a *"Supermercato della solidarietà"*, to the *"Last Minute Market"*, or to the national Food Counter network with its *"Siticibo"* project. Just as praiseworthy are the initiatives taken by the municipality of Reggio Emilia, *"Remida Food"*, and the *"Buon Samaritano"* project, organized by Amiat, the Turin urban health company, which takes care of the transportation of foodstuff from hypermarkets and school canteens to soup-kitchens. Or again, the initiatives of the municipalities of Bologna with its *"Il buono che avanza"*, and Brescia through the social cooperative Cauto. On the large-scale distribution part, worth of mention is the COOP project *"Brutti ma buoni"*.

Among the interventions aiming at reducing domestic biodegradable waste, the most frequently carried out procedure is auto-composting. As an example, we cite, among many others, the experience of Gaia Spa, the Asti municipal waste company, which set the growth of waste production on its territory at zero, also by means of incentives for domestic composting.

Reduction of festival and fête waste

One must also mention the initiatives dedicated to promote and publicize the so-called 'eco-festivals'. In the province of Parma, the aim of the project "*Ecofeste*" is to reduce waste production and increase separate collection during the numerous summer fêtes held in the province (over 300). With a similar project, the province of Reggio Emilia chose to offer incentives for positive experiences of waste reduction, separate collection and recycling during recreational, sports and cultural events organized on its territory. In the province of Lucca, ASCIT, the local municipal waste company, carried out an experiment for an eco-friendly management of local festivals by setting in motion territorial green-marketing strategies.

Reduction of disposable products: experiences on nappies

Other prevention experiences are being carried out on the use of reusable nappies. Some local authorities engaged in promoting the use of this kind of product: such is the case of the municipality of Torre Boldone (BG), of Fiemme Servizi Spa in Val di Fiemme (TN), of the province of Turin, and the municipality of Reggio Emilia. The province of Ferrara, with its "*Ecoidea*" counter, devoted some of its resources to this topic, publishing data and estimates, a list of companies producing or distributing reusable nappies, as well as a list of Italian municipalities carrying out donations campaigns to the families of new-born babies. Through its project "*Ecobebè*", the province of Varese, supported by the National Health Service, promotes the use of washable nappies.

Reuse of used goods

Also the reuse of goods, which prolongs their life and delays disposal, is fully entitled to fall within the waste prevention and minimization experiences. The Bolzano province, with its online database "*Ex-Novo*", associates local companies dealing in repair and rental services. The Follonica municipality created "*Ecoscambio*", a platform, both real and virtual, aiming at encouraging the exchange of used goods among citizens. With the same purpose Aprica Spa, in Brescia, in co-operation with Legambiente, organized the day of "*S...cambio di stagione*". In Brescia again, the social cooperative Cauto collects a wide variety of used goods on behalf of Caritas. With its project "*Una carrozzina per due*", the municipality of Ravenna, in co-operation with, among others, Hera Ravenna, collects used children's articles (toys, clothing, cots, pushchairs, prams) to redistribute them to associations caring for needy families.

Advanced local experiences

Noteworthy are the experiences of some local bodies which deployed initiatives concerning more than one flow of goods and products. Particularly significant is the case of Aprica Spa which, together with the municipality of Brescia, set in motion domestic composting programmes, ecological fête and festival projects, sustainable office projects, and a number of initiatives on prevention and reuse of goods related to the recovery of disused PCs, durable goods, furniture

and bulk, bicycles and foodstuff. It is now at work to develop prevention actions in co-operation with the region of Lombardy. Just as relevant is the work carried out by the Reggio Emilia municipality, coordinator, among other things, of “*Rifiuti21Network*”, a workgroup within local Agenda21Italy network, which promotes the diffusion of both reduction culture and waste sustainable management at national level.

Brescia and Reggio Emilia are two significant examples, as they govern very large territories. Normally, it's small realities which produce, for obvious reasons, the best results from the point of view of an eco-sustainable management of the territory. Such as Fiemme Servizi Spa, a Federambiente member from the Val di Fiemme (TN), which set in motion on its territory a number of initiatives to reduce waste, such as, for example, the tap sale of raw milk, the distribution of reusable nappies, as well as the exchange of used goods with its “*Festa del riuso*”. Or like the Capannori municipality (LU), an excellent example of virtuousness, with its initiatives for replacing bottled water with tap water in state schools, domestic composting, raw milk distribution, and the diffusion of draught detergent sale. Another noteworthy case is the Venice one: the AERes association, Venice for Altraeconomia, together with the municipality, brought forth a number of projects, such as the fine-tuning of a handbook for domestic waste prevention (a local adaptation of the Federambiente-ONR guidelines on prevention), a proper guidebook to lifestyles and to alternative consumption behaviours.

FEDERAMBIENTE CO-OPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL WASTE OBSERVATORY

In 2006, Federambiente and the National Waste Observatory (Osservatorio Nazionale Rifiuti) published, on the base of the experiences filed in the Database, the first *National guidelines on waste prevention and minimization*, which represent a useful operative guide to plan and activate policies and actions for the prevention of waste production. The aim of the *Guidelines*, which will be updated during 2009, is to supply, on the one hand the “modelling” of the best experiences in view of their repetition in other territorial contexts, and on the other hand a guidebook to the use of various tools (regulatory, economical, voluntary) already available at different territorial levels (national, regional, provincial and municipal) for the adjustment of prevention initiatives.

FEDERAMBIENTE CO-OPERATION WITH LEGAMBIENTE

During 2008, Federambiente and Legambiente, main Italian environmental NGO, organized a series of territorial technical seminars with the aim of enhancing and increasing the Database on prevention. The meetings, held in different regions, besides spotlighting local good practices, presented some extra-regional examples which could be possibly reproduced on the territory.

With this series of technical seminars, Federambiente and Legambiente pooled their commitments and experiences, prizing know-how and local good practices in order to actually open the national debate on prevention issues, also in view of the coming National prevention Programme, as provided for by the new EU directive on waste.

In 2008, the seminars were held in Milan and Bari in June, in Sesto Fiorentino in September, in Ravenna and Potenza in October, and in Verona and Salerno in November. Territorial appointments continued with the first 2009 meeting in Genoa, on 9th February. The series will end in a final encounter with the institutions and the main actors of the goods/waste cycle, which will be held in Rome during the present year and which, we hope, will trigger off the preparatory works for the setting-up of a national Table on prevention and for the ensuing definition of the National Programme.