

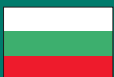
Waste prevention country profile

Bulgaria

February 2025



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European Environment Agency



Country profile: Bulgaria

General information

Name of the country/ region	Bulgaria
Geographical coverage of the waste prevention programme (national/ regional)	National
Type of programme (stand alone or integrated into waste management plan or into the circular economy strategy)	Waste prevention programme integrated into waste management plan
Title of programme and link to programme	<p>Objective 1 of the National Waste Management Plan 2021-2028: Reduce the harmful effects of waste by preventing its generation and encouraging its reuse - National Waste Prevention Program</p> <p>(“Цел 1: Намаляване на вредното въздействие на отпадъците чрез предотвратяване образуването им и насърчаване на повторното им използване - Национална програма за предотвратяване на образуването на отпадъци”)</p> <p>https://www.moew.government.bg/bg/proekt-na-nacionalen-plan-za-upravlenie-na-otpaducite-2021-2028/</p>
Duration of programme	2021 until 2028
Language	Bulgarian
Contact person in the country/region	N/A
Development process of the programme/ revision	<p>In Bulgaria, the requirement to develop a National Waste Prevention Program (NWPP) was introduced in the Waste Management Act adopted in 2012 and the country's first program was developed by the Ministry of Environment and Water (MoEW) and approved by the Council of Ministers in 2014 as part of the National Waste Management Plan (NWMP).</p> <p>The NWPP for the period 2021-2028 is the second program for the country. Given the high priority of food waste prevention at the global level and the requirements of Directive (EU) 2018/851 of 30 May 2018 amending Waste Framework Directive 2008/98 /EC (WFD), a separate sub-program for the prevention of food waste was prepared, following the steps of development and the philosophy of the current waste prevention program.</p>

	NWMP and NWPP have been developed in accordance with Art. 28 and Art. 29 of the WFD and Art. 49 and Art. 50 of the Waste Management Act of Republic of Bulgaria. In addition to the legal requirements, a number of European and national programming and methodological documents have been taken into account in their development such as the methodological guidance note of EC, DG Environment: “Preparation of a waste management plan” and others.
Foreseen budget for implementation of the programme	Implementation of the National Waste Prevention Program: 239.48 million BGN (approx. 122.15 million EUR). Implementation of the sub-program for the Prevention of Food Waste: 75.45 million BGN (approx. 38.49 million EUR).

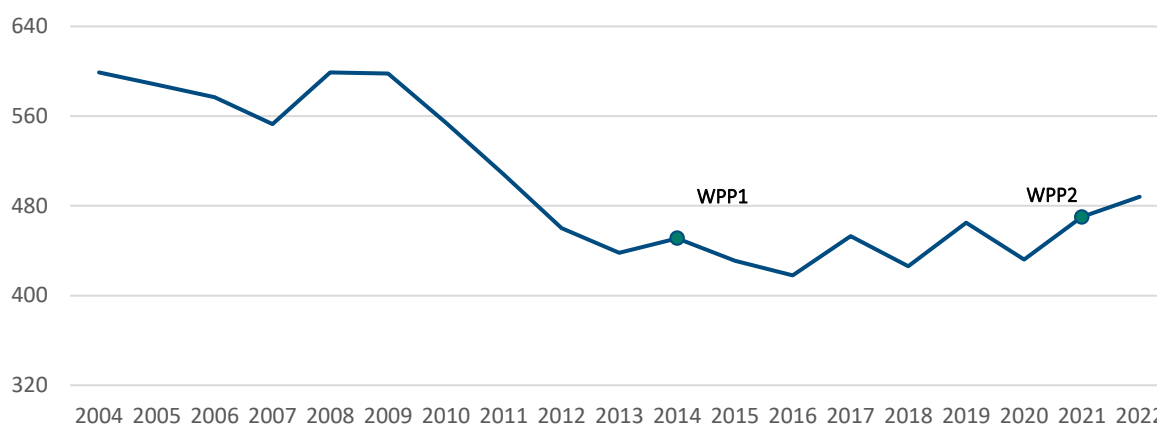
WASTE GENERATION

The following figures illustrate the progress towards waste prevention and decoupling of waste generation from economic growth in Bulgaria.

Municipal solid waste (MSW)

Municipal waste generation in Bulgaria has decreased between 2010 and 2022 (Figure 1). In 2022, the country generated 488 kg/cap of municipal waste, which is slightly below the estimated EU27 average of 513 kg/cap¹ in the same year.

Figure 1 Municipal waste generation in Bulgaria (kg per capita), 2004-2022



Source: Eurostat [ENV_WASMUN].

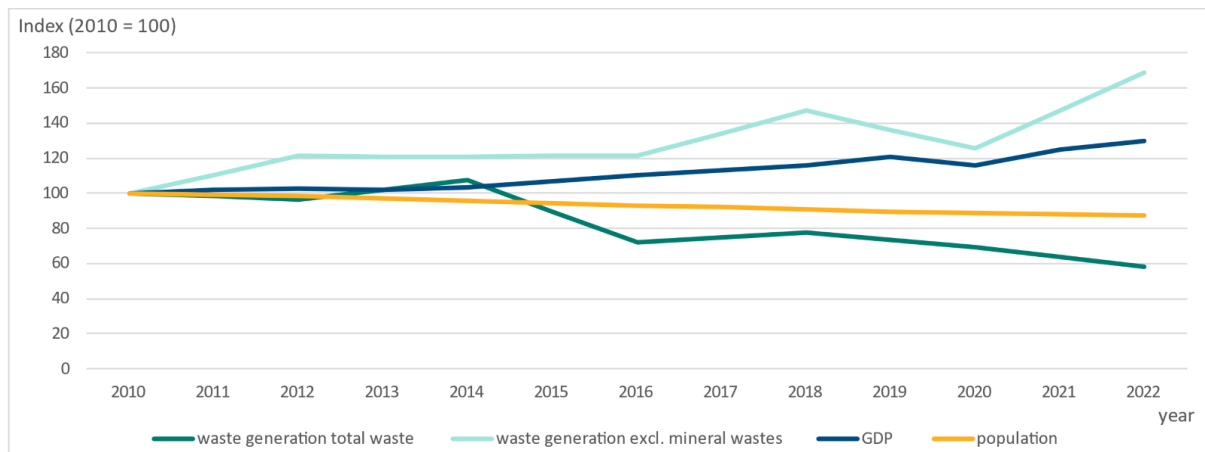
Note: As of reference year 2020, new reporting rules apply for calculating recycled municipal waste pursuant to the targets laid down in Article 11.2(c-e) of Directive 2008/98/EC. However, it is unclear based on the information available whether these new reporting rules have been implemented in Bulgaria yet.

¹ The EU average might be influenced by the situation that not all Member States already fully apply the definition of municipal waste as defined in the Waste Framework Directive as amended in 2018.

Total Waste

The total amount of waste generated in Bulgaria has decreased over the last 12 years (Figure 2). This trend is primarily driven by the largest waste categories, namely mineral waste from mining and quarrying. Excluding these categories results in an increasing trend of generated waste, mainly due to an increase in recyclable and mixed ordinary waste. Except for a drop in 2020, most likely due to the Covid-19 outbreak, Bulgaria's GDP increased. While total waste generation has decoupled from economic growth, total waste excluding major mineral wastes has increased more than the economy.

Figure 2 Generation of waste (total and excluding major mineral wastes), population and economic development, 2010-2022



Source: Eurostat [ENV_WASGEN, NAMA_10_PC, DEMO_GIND].

Note: Waste generation data for odd years are interpolated.

WASTE PREVENTION PROGRAMME

Objectives and priorities

1. Waste prevention objectives of the Programme - quantitative objectives (waste reduction) - qualitative objectives (reduction of hazardous substances/ environmental impacts)	Breaking the link between economic growth and improving human well-being on one hand, and the increase in waste generation and the associated harmful effects on human health and the environment on the other hand. Reduction of the amount of generated waste and the amount of harmful substances contained in the waste.
2. Sectors covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• manufacturing & industry• households• state administration• retail• infrastructure• service activities
3. Priority waste types	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As covered by the whole National Waste Management Plan:• food waste• household waste• industrial waste• construction waste• hazardous waste.
4. Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public institutions• Households• Municipalities• Business• Schools• NGOs

Targets, indicators and monitoring

1.	Indicators used to monitor progress	<p>On top of the indicator of high importance – rate of waste accumulation, presented as the amount of generated municipal waste per year per capita, the Action Plan of NWPP 2021-2028 recognizes a number of indicators based on the concrete activities / measures stipulated, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• generated industrial and construction waste per capita• rate of food waste generation• number of composters provided to households in each of the years of the program• number of waste prevention measures implemented by the municipalities• number of campaigns with the topic of waste prevention implemented at national and municipal level.
2.	Quantitative targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• decrease in generation of household waste per capita by municipalities by 2028 in comparison to 2020,• annual average of the growth rate of food waste during the period of the program to be lower than the growth rate of GDP,• at least two six-month waste prevention campaigns at the national level and at least 100 campaigns at the municipal level,<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100 000 households are provided by the composters in each of the years of the program.
3.	Monitoring mechanism of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring of the NWPP will be performed simultaneously by the same means as for all components under the NWMP:• information on the progress under each of the measures in the individual programs will be collected by the institutions and organizations, which are indicated as leading / responsible for the implementation of the respective measure,• each of these institutions will designate a coordinating unit within its structure, responsible among other tasks to submit data and information on implementation of the measures to the MoEW no later than the end of February of the year following the reporting year,• based on that, the Directorate for Waste Management and Soil Protection of the MoEW prepares an annual progress report which is to be approved by the Minister of Environment and Water, after its consideration by the Collegium of the MoEW.
4.	Evaluation of the programme	<p>Information on current indicators and target indicators for individual objectives will be collected through the integrated national waste management information system. Bulgarian Waste Management Act sets the following requirements related to the monitoring and evaluation of NWMP and NWPP as part of it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• they are to be evaluated and reported at least every 6 years and updated when necessary,

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- every three years the MoEW will submit to the Council of Ministers a report on the progress of the implementation of the objectives and measures of the program. The report should contain an assessment of the results of the implementation of the program, i.e. trends and the degree of implementation of the program objectives.

The reports on the implementation of NWMP and NWPP as part of it will be published on the website of the MoEW in order to inform the public.

Prevention measures

Implemented prevention measures according to Article 9

The objectives are envisaged to be achieved through specific measures / activities, which are presented in the Action Plan to the NWPP. For each measure, the implementation deadline, value and possible sources of funding, expected result from the implementation of the measure, indicators for monitoring the progress and implementation of the measure and responsible institutions (lead and partner / s) are indicated.

The measures are formulated as a result of the review of:

- the exemplary measures for prevention of waste generation, according to Appendix № 4 to Art. 50, para. 3, item 2 of the Waste Management Act and Annex IV to Art. 29 of the WFD,
 - review of the measures set in the National Waste Prevention Program 2014-2020,
 - the good practices in recent years, applied in Bulgaria and also in other countries,
 - measures arising from documents adopted at EU level (directives, decisions, etc.).
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The waste prevention programme includes the following measures that are proposed to avoid waste generation (Chapter 1.5):

Table 1: Specific waste prevention measures structured according to Art 9 WFD

Promote and support sustainable consumption models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of the knowledge-base on circular economy, monitoring waste and material flows through various projects.
Encourage the design, manufacturing and use of products that are resource-efficient, durable (including in terms of life span and absence of planned obsolescence), reparable, re-usable and upgradable .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of a procedure for financing projects and implementation of projects for the development of new product designs and technologies requiring less natural raw materials, generating less waste after the use of the products and development of products and technologies with better "environmental behaviour".

<p>Target products containing critical raw materials to prevent that those materials become waste.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the measures set in the Strategy for Transition to a Circular Economy relating to products containing raw materials of critical importance for the EU and the country, so as to prevent to the possible extend turning of products containing such raw materials into waste.
<p>Encourage the re-use of products and the setting up of systems promoting repair and re-use activities, including in particular for electrical and electronic equipment, textiles and furniture, as well as packaging and construction materials and products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the patent tax under the Local Tax Act to the permissible minimum for those taxable persons whose activity directly leads to the re-use of certain products (e.g. repair of shoes, furniture, clothes, household appliances, etc.) and hence to waste prevention. • Application of a procedure for financing projects and implementation of projects for acquisition or improvement of the qualification for crafts related to repair services and repair of products. • Increasing the number of containers / points for collection of textile waste for reuse is seen as a desirable practice and the need to include this waste stream into the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme over the next years is recognized.
<p>Encourage, as appropriate and without prejudice to intellectual property rights , the availability of spare parts, instruction manuals, technical information, or other instruments, equipment or software enabling the repair and re-use of products without compromising their quality and safety.</p>	
<p>Reduce waste generation in processes related to industrial production, extraction of minerals, manufacturing, construction and demolition, taking into account best available techniques.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion of voluntary agreements between the MoEW and branch organizations for cooperation in the field of preventing generation of industrial waste. <p>This topic is covered by other components of the Bulgarian National Waste Management Plan 2021-2028 (e.g. by the program for achieving the goals for recycling and utilization of construction and demolition waste).</p>

Reduce the generation of food waste in primary production, in processing and manufacturing, in retail and other distribution of food, in restaurants and food services as well as in households as a contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to reduce by 50 % per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and to reduce food losses along production and supply chains by 2030.

- Development and dissemination of a guide for prevention of generation of household food waste.
- Development of municipal waste management programs with included goals and measures for food waste prevention and their implementation into practice.
- Application of a procedure for financing projects and implementation of projects focused on technologies / product design, which lead to reduction and prevention of food waste generation in the food industry.
- Implementation of continuous targeted campaigns for clarification and provision of information on food waste at the central and municipal level, including on the importance of recognition between "Best before date" and "Date of expiry" of commercial food products (at least four six-month campaigns to be conducted at the national level and 50 campaigns at the municipal level).
- Implementation of demonstration projects for food waste prevention.

Encourage food donation and other redistribution for human consumption, prioritising human use over animal feed and the reprocessing into non-food products.

- Conclusion of voluntary agreements between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and branch organizations in the field of food production and processing and between the Ministry of Tourism and branch organizations in the field of restaurants and tourism, for cooperation in the field of food waste and implementation of the measures.
- Elimination of the requirement for affixing an inscription of food from the commercial establishments / public catering establishments if they wish to donate food before the expiration date (amendment of the regulations).
- Support for the activities of institutions that organize and carry out food donation before the expiration date (based on the "Food and basic material support program" 2021-2027, a grant agreement with an organization / s in the field of donation food before expiration date was concluded, including an extensive information campaign).
- Implementation of the food donation opportunities with a view to overcome barriers for food donation through VAT enforcement mechanisms.

<p>Promote the reduction of the content of hazardous substances in materials and products, without prejudice to harmonised legal requirements concerning those materials and products laid down at Union level, and ensure that any supplier of an article as defined in point 33 of Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No. 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council provides the information pursuant to article 33(1) of that regulation to the European Chemicals Agency as from 5 January 2021.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of a procedure for financing projects and implementation of projects for the development of new product designs and technologies for materials / products containing less hazardous substances, generating less waste after the use and the products and technologies with better "environmental behaviour".
<p>Reduce the generation of waste, in particular waste that is not suitable for preparing for re-use or recycling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratuitous provision of household composters for green and other biowaste. • Reduction of waste paper and other office consumables through the implementation of national and sectoral programming documents for "e-government".
<p>Identify products that are the main sources of littering, notably in natural and marine environments, and take appropriate measures to prevent and reduce litter from such products, where Member States decide to implement this obligation through market restrictions, they shall ensure that such restrictions are proportionate and non-discriminatory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending the range of plastic shopping bags for which a product fee is paid. • Annual carrying out of thematic inspections by the Regional Inspectorate for Environment and Water for compliance by the retail with the requirements of the Regulation on plastic shopping bags.
<p>Aim to halt the generation of marine litter as a contribution towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regulation determining the procedure and amount for payment of the product fee for plastic shopping bags has been adopted.
<p>Develop and support information campaigns to raise awareness about waste prevention and littering.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of continuous targeted campaigns to explain and provide information on waste prevention policies. • Involving waste prevention issues into the information campaigns of the PROs under the extended producer responsibility scheme. • Incentives for expanding the participation of NGOs, schools, universities, municipalities and other central and regional institutions and business organizations in the European Waste Reduction Week.

Additional implemented prevention measures, not covered by Article 9

Measures of different nature are included in the Action Plan of the program, which can be differentiated to information-educational, economic, administrative-regulatory or normative. Some of the measures are aimed at several target groups, and some at a specific target group (households, businesses, students, etc.).

Several measures aim to promote and implement waste prevention in general through the state administration institutions, e.g.:

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- by increasing the number of complex permits issued/updated by the Regional Inspectorate for Environment and Water that take into account waste prevention policies,
 - preparation of recommendations for waste prevention as part of the guidelines of the MoEW for the development of Municipal Waste Management Programs for the period 2021-2028 aiming to cover all municipalities in the country having their waste management programs with included waste prevention goals and measures.
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FOOD WASTE PREVENTION

In Bulgaria precise data on the generation of food waste by sectors according to the EU methodology to measure food waste adopted in 2019 are not yet available. However, based on data from the Executive Environment Agency and in view of Regulation № 2/2014 on waste classification, estimates have been made showing that in 2018, the total amounts of food waste in Bulgaria reached almost 500 thousand tons, of which the main source of food waste were households (almost 58%), followed by food processing and production sector (38%) and primary production (3%).

Measures to prevent food waste

Bulgarian Food Bank was established in 2012 and is currently the leading national organization in the country specialized in collection, storage and distribution of donated food products with a short shelf life, in accordance with all food safety standards. With the help of a network of partner organizations and volunteers across the country, food is distributed to thousands of people in need.

In line with global goals and European food waste policies, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry has begun developing a comprehensive National Program to Prevent and Reduce Food Loss, which will include measures targeting food loss and generation of waste from the farm to the table.

The Action Plan of the Sub-Program for Food Waste Prevention sets a strategic and operational goals consistent with the objectives of the NWPP 2021-2028 and envisages implementation of various measures and activities towards food waste prevention in the total value of around 75,5 mil BGN (approx. 38,5 mil EUR).

The measures have mostly information-educational and administrative-regulatory character and are aimed at several target groups, incl. public institutions, households and business.

Their implementation will contribute to:

- improving the quality of information and tracking of the quantities of food waste generated, reused, recycled and recovered,
- raising public awareness of the issue of food loss and food waste,
- raising awareness of various target groups (municipalities, NGOs, businesses, households, etc.) regarding the prevention of food waste,
- stimulating food donation.

REUSE OF PRODUCTS

Data

Bulgaria has not reported any data for reuse of textiles, furniture, electrical and electronic equipment and construction and building materials according to Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/19 for the year 2021 by the reporting deadline (EEA, 2024)

Measures to support reuse

Activities and measures targeting reuse are mostly covered by other components of the Bulgarian National Waste Management Plan 2021-2028 (e.g. Program for achieving the objectives of preparation for re-use and recycling of municipal waste).

In the Action plan of NWPP 2021-2028 (as part of the NWMP) a significant measure to support reuse foresees an amendment of the Local Tax Act introducing a determination of a patent tax at the permissible minimum for those taxable persons whose activity directly leads to the re-use of certain products (e.g. repair of shoes, furniture, clothes, household appliances, etc.). An indicator to this measure is set as number of municipalities whose municipal councils voted for a minimum patent tax rate for services related to the re-use of products and hence to the implementation of waste prevention policies.

Rich variety of things and vintage items can get another life at one of the flea markets in the streets of Bulgarian cities, mostly held as an informal gathering of vendors who want to sell things they no longer use. The largest flea market known as Bitaka takes place every weekend in Sofia.

To support the reuse of products, a number of second-hand online shops operate on Bulgarian websites, while one of the initiatives sometimes host pop-up events in Sofia. Some of the online shops focus on selling clothes, shoes, and accessories (e.g. modeteka.bg, remix.bg, mania.bg) or even offer textiles for rent, while others offer a wide variety of inter alia used furniture (e.g. bazar.bg, olx.bg).

Best practice examples

Textile Reuse in Bulgaria

The Association of Recyclers and Traders of Second-Hand Clothes was founded in order to sustain the industry, social and economic importance for the development of circular economy and to control compliance with the European and national legislation concerning textile processing and trade in textiles. It unites over 40 companies in Bulgaria specialized in the collection, sorting and sales of reusable textiles. Separately collected textile waste is sent to sorting centres where it undergoes a number of processes before it is converted into second-hand clothes and shoes of various quality. Part of those items is marketed in Bulgaria and larger part is exported to other countries.

Free Compost Campaign

The capital of Bulgaria has facilities for processing green waste and other biowaste, such as the “Han Bogrov” Facility for Biological Treatment, producing compost and electricity. Since 2014, all biowaste, including food from restaurants, kindergartens, markets, retail chains, and green waste, such as branches, leaves or grass, are collected separately and processed. This led to the initiative introduced at the beginning of 2015, by which the municipality provides up to 10 kg of compost free of charge to all Sofia residents who have paid a municipal waste tax. Part of the produced compost is used back in the gardens and parks of Sofia.

Campaign of Sofia Municipality "Compost at home"

In 2010, the municipality of Sofia launched a home composting program named “Compost at home”, which aims to encourage citizens to reduce the final household food and green waste, as well as to encourage the pursuit of recycling of these types of waste. Over the years, many thousands of 700-litre composters, activators, aerators and information materials were provided to households, schools,

kindergartens and parks, who have expressed a desire to become partners of the municipality in all of its 24 metropolitan areas.

One of the waste prevention measures included in The National Waste Prevention Program 2021-2028 builds on these achievements and sets the target of 100 000 composters provided by Bulgarian municipalities to the households by 2028.

Links to circular economy

Waste prevention is an integral part of the comprehensive transformation towards a circular economy. It reduces the input of natural resources into the economy as well as the necessary efforts to collect and recycle waste.

Approaches for improving circularity are often highly interlinked with successful waste prevention. The following table shows which circular strategies are explicitly integrated into Bulgaria's waste prevention programme.

Topic	Addressed in the programme	Comments
Eco-design	Yes	Support of projects covering eco-design is anchored in the measures of the NWPP Action Plan.
Repair, refurbishment and remanufacture	Yes	E.g. concrete tax incentives and financial support of projects encouraging repair and refurbishment are planned.
Recycling	No	Provisions and plans related to recycling are covered by other components of the Bulgarian NWMP 2021-2028.
Economic incentives and finance	Yes	E.g. - new requirements under the waste management legislation strengthening the “polluter pays” principle, - favouring activities which directly lead to the re-use of certain products (e.g. repair of shoes, furniture, clothes, household appliances, etc.) through tax incentives.
Circular business models	Yes	E.g. Extended Producer Responsibility scheme, which is successfully applied to packaging, ELVs, WEEE, waste oils and petroleum products, batteries and accumulators and tires.
Eco-innovation	Yes	E.g. implementation of the program for scientific and development activities, as well as for innovations in waste prevention as part of the activities of the Research Fund.
Governance, skills and knowledge	Yes	Initiatives such as: - guidelines developed by the MoEW dedicated to all central and regional government institutions and to the municipalities for preparation of a plan for prevention of waste generation in their daily life, - preparation and implementation of plans for waste prevention by the municipalities in their social, health, educational and other units and enterprises