Waste prevention country profile

Norway

February 2025

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European Environment Agency

Country profile: Norway

General information

Name of the country/ region	Norway
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)	Integrated into waste management plan
Title of programme and link to programme	Avfallsplan 2020 – 2025: Status og planer for avfallshåndtering, inkludert avfallsforebyggingsprogram ('Waste plan 2020 – 2025: Status and plans for waste management, including waste prevention programme') https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/avfallsplan-2020-2025/id2685578/
Duration of programme	2020 to 2025
Language	Norwegian
Contact person in the country/region	Jon Fonnlid Larsen, jon.fonnlid.larsen@miljodir.no Miljødirektoratet (Norwegian Environment Agency) http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/ Miljøverndepartementet (The Ministry of the Environment) http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/md.html?id=668
Development process of the programme/ revision	Norway will revise the national waste management plan and waste prevention programme in 2025
Foreseen budget for implementation of the programme	The waste prevention programme does not include a specific budget for implementing the measures.

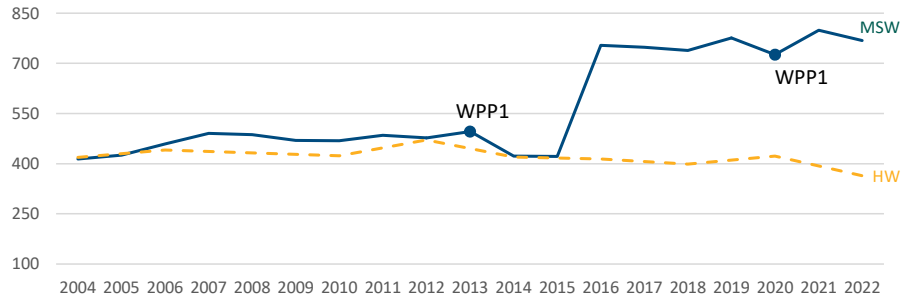
WASTE GENERATION

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

Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)

Between 2004 and 2007, municipal waste generation per capita increased slightly, stabilizing at approximately 470–490 kg per capita until 2013 (Figure 1).
From 2013 to 2015, MSW generation decreased from 496 kg to 422 kg per capita, with a similar decline observed in household waste (HW). According to the latest Waste prevention programme (WPP), this reduction is attributed to a significant decrease in household waste, driven by reduced paper usage due to the shift to digital media and a higher proportion of household consumption being directed toward services rather than physical goods.
However, from 2016 onward, MSW generation exceeded 700 kg per capita, significantly surpassing the EU average of 513 kg per capita in 2022. This sudden increase is most likely due to changes in reporting practices, with more waste from non-household sources being classified as MSW, as waste from household activities decreased by approximately 23% over the past decade (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Municipal waste generation in Norway (kg per capita), including auxiliary indicator HW (waste from household activities), 2004-2022

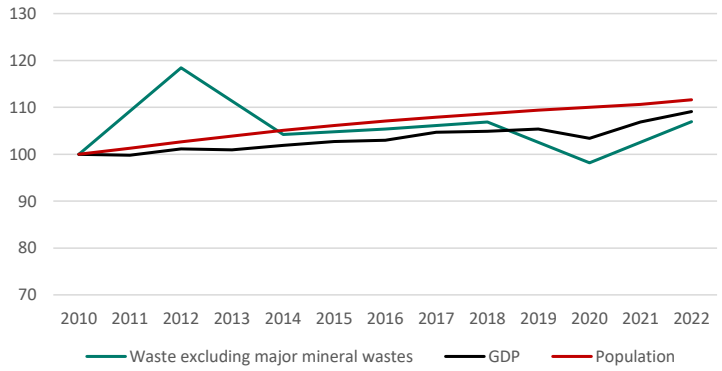


Source: Eurostat [ENV_WASMUN] and [ENV_WASGEN].
Note: Data for household waste in the odd years are extrapolated.

Total waste (excluding major mineral waste)

Norway's total waste generation (excluding major mineral waste) has experienced significant fluctuations over the years. It increased notably between 2010 and 2012, declined by 2014, rose slightly until 2018, dropped again in 2020, and then increased in 2022 (see Figure 2). The decrease in 2020 is most likely linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic slowdown.
When comparing total waste generation in absolute terms with GDP and population growth, total waste increased by 7%, which is lower than the population growth of 12% and GDP growth of 9% since 2010. On a per capita basis, it appears that some of the increase in total waste is partially attributable to population growth, as, for instance, total waste per capita in 2022 had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, remaining 2% lower than in 2010.
While total waste (both in absolute terms and per capita) has followed GDP growth in recent years, it has done so at a slower rate. This indicates signs of modest decoupling between economic growth and waste generation.

Figure 2 Generation of waste (total and excluding major mineral wastes), population and economic development, 2010-2022, (2010=100)



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)	• "Norway's environmental target 4.3 states that the growth in the amount of waste must be significantly lower than the economic growth" (p. 41, machine translated) • "Norway's environmental target 4.2 on stopping or significantly reducing emissions of substances hazardous to health and the environment, which applies to, among other things, products, contributes to qualitative waste prevention." (p. 41, machine translated) • In 2017, the authorities and the food industry entered into a voluntary but binding agreement to reduce food waste generated in Norway. The goal of the agreement is to halve food waste across the food value chain by 2030. The agreement includes the entire food value chain from primary production, industry, wholesaler, retail, service industry to households.
2.	Sectors covered	• Construction and infrastructure; • sale, retail, transport, households; • public services; • hotels restaurants and catering.
3.	Priority waste types	• Food/organic; • textiles; • construction and demolition waste; • hazardous waste; • household/municipal waste; • packaging; • waste electrical and electronic equipment batteries; • other.
4.	Target groups	Authorities, industry, businesses, NGOs, households and public.

Targets, indicators and monitoring

1.	Indicators used to monitor progress[1]	For **t**arget 4.2 (*The use and emissions of chemicals on the priority list must be stopped*), one of six indicators is related to hazardous waste: **Indicator 4.2.3**: "*The amount og hazardous were the treatment is unknown*" **For** target 4.3 (*The growth in waste generation must be significantly lower than economic growth*)**,** two indicators are used: 4.3.1 "*the amount of household waste generated per capita in relation to private consumption per capita"* 4.3.2: " *The amount of commercial waste generated per capita in relation to GDP per capita*"
2.	Quantitative targets	Halving food waste by 2030.
3.	Monitoring mechanism of the programme	See below.
4.	Evaluation of the programme	The programme has not been evaluated.

Commented [JL1]: https://miljostatus.miljodirektoratet.no/miljomal/miljoindikatorer-/

[1] These indicators related to prevention are among the 81 indicators used to measure Norway's climate and environmental goals, as listed on Miljøindikatorer

Prevention measures

Implemented prevention measures according to Article 9	The Waste Prevention Programme outlines the following general prevention measures and tools: 1. Less environmental toxins 2. Environmental labeling 3. Environmentally friendly public procurement 4. Increased knowledge and research 5. Attitude-creating work 6. Prevention and reuse in producer responsibility schemes 7. Differentiated waste fees and other instruments that promote waste prevention 8. Industrial permits 9. Statistics 10. Economic instruments 11. Stimulation for more reuse and repair 12. Service provision, sharing and renting Detailed information on specific measures can be found in the following overview. However, it is not clear based on the wording of the WPP whether these measures have been implemented, underway or planned for the future (or a combination of all three).

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	Public procurement regulations include a general provision on environmental weighting. Research on consumer behaviour, waste minimization (“Miljøforsk" program) The Research Council also supports innovation in public procurement that includes projects aimed at a circular economy that can contribute to waste prevention
Encourage the design, manufacturing and use of products that are resource-efficient, durable (including in terms of life span and absence of planned obsolence), reparable, re-usable and upgradable.	Research on environmentally friendly and resource-efficient products and waste solutions (“Miljøforsk" program) Industry-oriented research – the “User-led innovation arena" (BIA) program finances projects that will provide high value creation both for the participating companies and for society.
Target products containing critical raw materials to prevent that those materials become waste.	Short description p 37 (1.3.13)
Encourage the re-use of products and the setting up of systems promoting repair and	The Norwegian Environment Agency leads a group on circular economy under the Nordic Council of

re-use activities, including in particular for electrical and electronic equipment, textiles and furniture, as well as packaging and construction materials and products.	Ministers which works actively to provide increased knowledge about waste prevention. Prevention of textiles is a priority area. No tax on sales of secondhand items between private individuals. Increased municipal recycling stations. Initiatives by NGOs on exchange days and reuse campaigns. No VAT for non-profit and charity organizations and voluntary organizations for secondhand events (e.g. flea markets, single/short term sales and auctions) Establishment of a “complaint period” of 5 years for goods that are intended to last longer than 2 years to incentivize repair.
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.	5 years product warranty on some products (p 49)
Reduce waste generation in processes related to industrial production, extraction of minerals, manufacturing, construction and demolition, taking into account best available techniques.	Industrial permits from state authorities emphasize the minimization of resource use and recycling of waste to reduce the amount of waste from industry, and requirements to use the best available techniques. Provision of trainings and guidance between counties and national authorities.
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.	The Norwegian Environment Agency leads a group on circular economy under the Nordic Council of Ministers which works actively to provide increased knowledge about waste prevention. Prevention of food waste is a priority area. Norwegian authorities, research environments and partly also the food industry participate in the international work to reduce food waste, through the UN, OECD, the EU and the Nordic Council of Ministers.
Encourage food donation and other redistribution for human consumption, prioritising human use over animal feed and the reprocessing into non-food products.	Tax exemption from VAT for food donation

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.	Working at the EU level through chemical regulations (e.g. REACH), product regulations and biocides regulations. Working actively with waste and chemicals under the UN's waste and chemical conventions. Strict emission requirements, requirements for waste treatment and clean-up measures. Eco-labels Swan and EU-Blomsten which includes requirements that restrict the use and release of hazardous substances beyond requirements in current regulations.
Reduce the generation of waste, in particular waste that is not suitable for preparing for re-use or recycling.	Municipalities are encouraged to differentiate the waste fee that households must pay for household waste. E.g. providing a lower fee for households that generate less waste.
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.	Norwegian Environment Agency has financed the report "Reduced littering of single use plastics" from Mepex and Eunomia. (page 58 in the waste prevention program)
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.	Environmental taxes are used to a limited extent to price environmentally harmful activities. This includes environmental taxes on beverage packaging to price the cost of littering.
Develop and support information campaigns to raise awareness about waste prevention and littering.	EU's tool Environmental Footprint (PEF/OEF), enables easier assessment and comparison of the environmental impact of products and organizations, and will be able to contribute to waste prevention The directive on plastic products requires product labeling with information for consumers that will contribute to waste prevention, including reduced littering. Projects to inform and engage individuals, e.g. grants to the Nature Conservation Association's campaign "Take care of what you have" and the Nordic clothes change day.

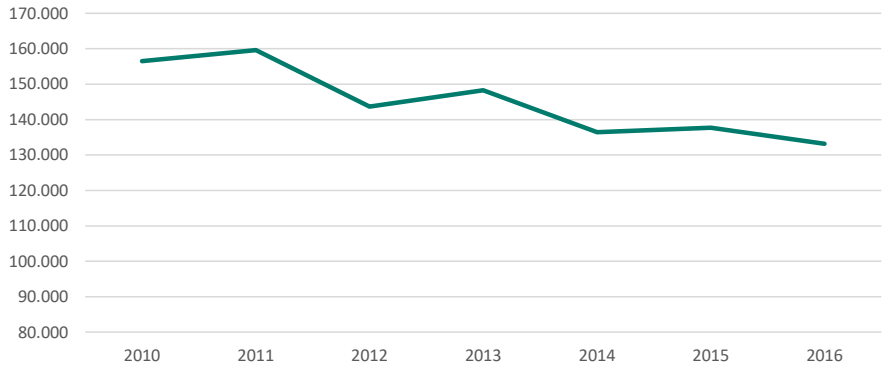
Additional implemented prevention measures, not covered by Article 9	Statistics Norway (SSB) works continuously to improve the methodology for collecting waste statistics as a basis for developing and improving waste prevention measures.

FOOD WASTE PREVENTION

Food waste generation

Between 2010 and 2016, an overall decrease food waste generation (based on the three stages industry, wholesale and retail) can be observed for Norway. Although the trend fluctuated between the years, Norway managed to decrease its food waste by up to 15% reaching around 133 thousand kg in 2016. The reduction of the food waste in this period corresponds to a reduction of 6.68 kg per capita or 21%. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with food waste declined in the same period by 11%. Producers are accounted for most of the food waste (57%), followed by retailers (40%) and wholesalers (2%).[2] Food waste makes up a large part of household waste. In 2018, it was calculated that each resident threw away approx. 80 kg of food waste in households, of which approx. 43 kg was usable food.

Figure 3: Food waste generation (based on industry, wholesale and retail) in Norway, 2010-2016



Source: Stensgard and Hanssen (2016).

Measures to prevent food waste

"Guidelines for Safe Reuse of Food" aims to reduce food waste. As part of the KuttMatsvinn2020 Research project, Matvett (The Food Industry's organization for Food Waste prevention and Reduction) and the research institutes Nofima and Østfoldforskning developed a guide with practical tips and advice on how to ensure the safe reuse of food. The purpose of this guide is to provide professional support and inspiration to those who produce and sell prepared dishes. Through this assessment, sellers can become more confident in whether food that has been presented can be used again or should be discarded.

In 2019, a "Cut Food Waste" week was arranged by Matvett to mobilize actors in the food service industry making their efforts towards food waste reduction visible. The initiative gained attention in social media, both through examples of how some of the participating food businesses communicate with their guests to throw less food and in connection with a "Look, smell, taste" campaign that Matvett conducted in social media. A festival was arranged in collaboration with The Environment Agency at Oslo's Municipality, Oslo European Green Capital, a network of actors working to reduce food waste in Norway, such as Too Good To Go, the Network of Norwegian Food Banks, the movements "Eat your food!" and "Foodlist", as well as several food service businesses.

Norway's biggest environmental organization, "The Future in Our Hands", continued the success of their "FoodWIn" project, which now includes more than 10 municipalities. The project is part of their

[2] https://www.matvett.no/uploads/documents/OR.06.18-Edible-food-waste-in-Norway-Report-on-key-figures-2016.pdf

"Climate heroe" campaign. In addition, their "Food Win Challange" gathered more than 40 families who reduced their food waste by 70% within a month.

In order to reduce food waste and encourage food donations, the Norwegian government introduced a VAT exemption on food redistribution to charity. It is also worth noting that the Norwegian Government and the food industry have signed an agreement (#Envision2030) to reduce food waste in Norway by 50 % by 2030. Food waste here means the usable part of food that has been produced for human consumption, but which is thrown away or taken out of the food chain for other purposes. The work embraces the entire food chain, from primary production, industry, wholesalers, groceries, the catering industry to households.

REUSE OF PRODUCTS

Data

According to 2021 data reported to the EEA according to Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/19 (EEA, 2024), Norway re-used:

- 13 203 tonnes of textiles;
- 33 979 tonnes of electrical and electronic devices;
- 153 692 tonnes of furniture.

It should be noted that this data has been reported for the first time. More information about the interpretation and limitations of the data set are available (EEA, 2024).

Measures to support reuse

The project “A Nordic strategy for collection, sorting, reuse and recycling of textiles” is one of three projects in Norway to increase the reuse and recycling of textiles in the Nordic region. This initiative, financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers and proposed by the Nordic Waste group, fosters the cooperation between textile producers and retailers towards the minimization of textile waste and its increase of reuse.

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 the Norwegian waste prevention programme.

Topic	Addressed in the programme	Comments
Eco-design	Yes	Emphasis on qualitative prevention and phasing out hazardous substances.
Repair, refurbishment and remanufacture	Yes	Focus on reuse and reusable packaging.
Recycling	Yes	Integrated approaches for several waste streams.
Economic incentives and finance	Yes	Inter alia tax reductions for reused plastic bottles.
Circular business models	No	Not specifically mentioned.
Eco-innovation	Yes	Programs in the Research Council of Norway
Governance, skills and knowledge	Yes	E.g. focusing on GPP