



Food waste collection: CIC brings the Italian model to New York

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Food waste collection improves in the Big Apple thanks to the Italian example: the Italian Compost and Biogas Association (CIC) proves it, after directing a trial in New York which involved **more than 600 households** in a residential complex with 25,000 residents.

With the introduction of compostable bags and by positioning collection bins closer to the apartments, **CIC estimated a 4-fold increase of biowaste collection.**

“About food waste collection Italy has a lot to teach to foreign countries: in Europe we are ready to transpose the new EU Directives of the Circular Economy Package, we are the most advanced state even compared to Germany”, explains **Massimo Centemero**, Director of CIC and vice president of ECN – the European Compost Network.

Food waste collection increased 400% thanks to the Italian model: this is the result of the trial carried out between September and December in New York in the buildings of Stuyvesant Town (StuyTown), one of the largest residential complexes of Manhattan, in which the Italian experts of the Italian Compost and Biogas Association (CIC) introduced tools and information able to involve citizens and increase the amount of organic waste collected.

The results have been presented in New York, in the framework of the International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) organized by the United States Composting Council. A trial with the purpose of increase the participation of **more than 600 households** living in the 25,000 people residential complex of **Stuyvesant Town**, already covered with a food waste door to door collection scheme which foresees a dedicated bin, along the lines of the Italian model already implemented successfully in many cities.

“However, the participation of citizens had been tepid”, explains Massimo Centemero, Director of CIC and Vice President of ECN – the European Compost Network. For this reason Novamont, the Italian company manufacturing the raw material for compostable bags used also in the United States, commissioned the experts of CIC to carry out a study aimed at improving the amount of food waste collected.

“According to our estimates, before the trial only 10-15% of food waste generated in the area interested by this study was properly delivered in the dedicated brown bin. During the trial we introduced elements such as the facilitated supply of **compostable bags** and a **collection bin located close to each apartment**: by doing this, the capture of organic waste increased 4-fold reaching 60-70% of the generated amount, while keeping a very high quality level of kitchen waste collected” explains **Michele Giavini, CIC’s expert and coordinator of the project**. “Also, our team cooperated fruitfully with Eunomia, with Biobag, which provided the vented kitchen pails and the compostable bags in MATER-BI® bioplastics manufactured by Novamont, and with the local staff of StuyTown who constantly monitored the weight and the quality of organic waste collected during the 8 weeks of the trial”.

“We realized how also in the United States the scheme invented in Italy and based on a convenient and effective system, from the kitchen to the collection point, is the one allowing the highest participation from citizens” highlights Massimo Centemero.

According to a recent survey by BioCycle¹ in the United States organic waste collection is performed by only 320 municipalities, mostly in the West Coast, involving 4-5 million people on a total of 325 million, often with low participation. In Italy, CIC estimates that more than 4,000 Municipalities with about 40 million people are covered by this service and more than 4 million food waste is collected and converted into compost, a natural fertilizer, and biomethane, a zero emission biofuel. A value chain that generated, and keeps doing so, a remarkable number of green jobs apart from the reduction of environmental impact. “These figures have no choice but to keep increasing, also thanks to the approval by the European Parliament of the Circular Economy Package which foresees the **mandatory separate collection of biowaste** by 2023, to generate quality compost and bring back organic matter to the soil. We have a lot to teach abroad, but we just don’t realize” – highlights Centemero – Italy is indeed the most advanced country in this sense, even more than Germany, despite the lackness of incentives and all the waste management problems suffered by our country”.

"The trial in Stuyvesant Town proved the importance and convenience of recycling organic waste: results have been encouraging and very promising for the future, but to maintain them commitment and resources from the management of the residential

¹ <https://www.biocycle.net/2017/12/06/residential-food-waste-collection-access-u-s/>

complex is needed" says **Samantha MacBride, Director of Research and Operations - Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability, NYC Department of Sanitation**. "We have different culture and political systems than Europe and Italy, but I think we can gather many information from the Italian example and from the large cities where separate collection works well. We are living a social and environmental transition period, and we also need a change in the economic model to stop the use of fossil resources and to begin using biobased and sustainable ones. Separate collection of biowaste and the production of biogas and organic fertilizer are part of this transition".

Who is CIC

CIC (Consorzio Italiano Compostatori, Italian Compost and Biogas Association) is a no-profit association representing more than 130 companies dealing with both construction and operation of composting and anaerobic digestion plants, category associations, companies dealing with organic waste, manufacturers of machinery and equipment, laboratories, public and research bodies. CIC promotes policies about waste reduction, implementation of separate collection of waste, processing and recycling of biomasses and compostable organic fractions. It promotes initiatives aimed at the valorization and proper usage of the output products from composting and anaerobic digestion also doing research, investigation and dissemination activities. It supports the production of organic fertilizers, safeguarding and monitoring the appropriate methodologies and procedures according to the principles of the circular economy.

For more information, the official website: www.compost.it

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