Environmental Protection Agency

COMPOSTING AND ANAEROBIC DIGESTION (AD)

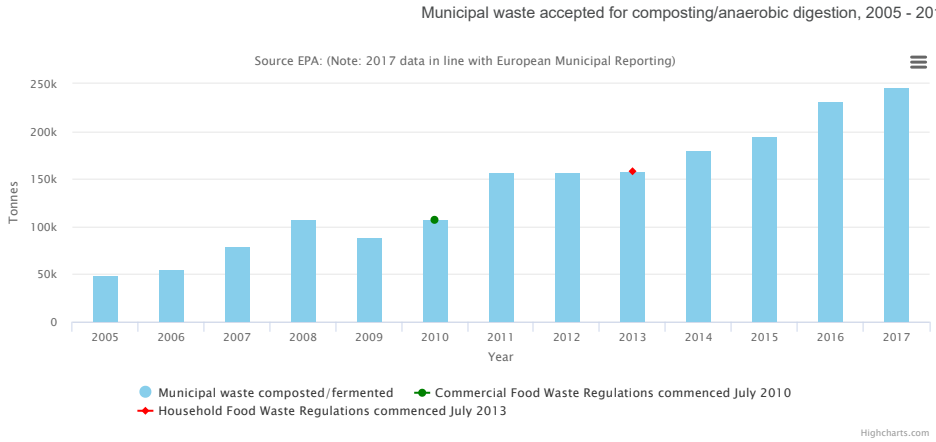
EPA Waste Data Release, December 2019

Reference Year 2017

This report presents information on composting and anaerobic digestion in 2017 at facilities authorised to accepted organic waste. The quantity of waste generated in Ireland and accepted for treatment at composting and anaerobic digestion plants increased from 353,000 tonnes in 2016 to 380,000 tonnes in 2017, an increase of eight per cent. (please note this excludes biostabilised organic fines, for information on biostabilised organic fines please see last paragraph)

The figures do not include (i) home composting estimates (ii) facilities which only treated their own waste, and (iii) waste imported to Ireland for treatment.

The quantity of biodegradable municipal waste sent for composting and anaerobic digestion increased by seven per cent between 2016 and 2017 (from 231 ktonnes to 246 ktonnes). The food waste regulations (commercial and household) have had a positive impact on increasing the quantity of municipal waste accepted for composting/anaerobic digestion.



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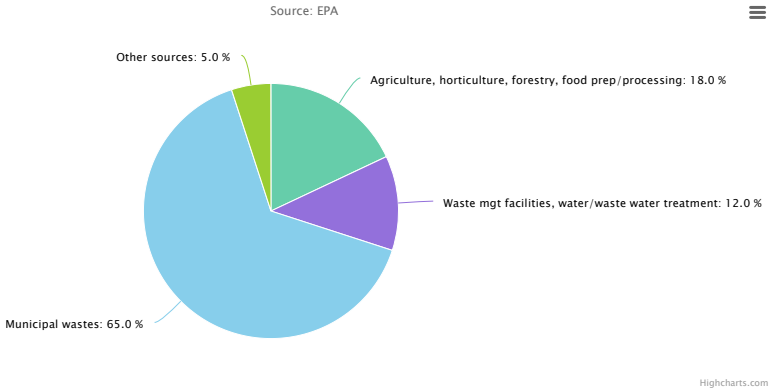
KEY TRENDS

- Municipal waste (kitchen and canteen food waste, garden and park green waste, edible oils & fats) made up the majority (65 per cent) of the waste accepted for composting/anaerobic digestion. Other types of waste included wastes from agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, forestry, hunting and fishing, food preparation and processing make and water and waste water treatment sludges.
- Seventy-five per cent of biodegradable kitchen and canteen waste that was accepted for composting/anaerobic digestion originated from households. The 2018 Waste Characterisation Study indicates that there is scope to increase composting/anaerobic digestion of non-household waste as 33 per cent of non-household residual waste is made up of organic waste. To boost our recycling percentages and reduce methane emissions from landfills, this waste should be diverted to brown bins and composted.
- Most (74 per cent) of the waste accepted for composting/anaerobic digestion was composted rather than digested
- Of the waste accepted for composting/anaerobic digestion, 14 per cent was exported for treatment abroad.
- Products of composting and anaerobic digestion were used in horticulture, landscaping and agricultural land treatment.

COMPOSITION OF WASTE ACCEPTED FOR COMPOSTING/AD IN 2017



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BIOSTABILISED ORGANIC FINES

In 2017, five composting facilities biostabilised organic fines arising from the mechanical treatment of residual waste. Biostabilised residual waste has been treated to achieve an EPA approved biodegradability stability standard prior to use as landfill cover. There was a significant increase in the quantity of organic fines accepted for biostabilisation between 2013 (50,000 tonnes) and 2014 (100,000 tonnes). The quantity accepted levelled out between 2015 and 2016 with 119,000 tonnes accepted in 2015 and 122,000 tonnes in 2016. There is a slight increase to 131,100 tonnes accepted in 2017.

Show Table 1 Waste types accepted for composting & anaerobic digestion, 2013 to 2017

List of Waste entry chapter sub-heading	Waste types accepted for composting and anaerobic digestion
02 01	Wastes from agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, forestry, hunting and fishing
02 02	Wastes from the preparation and processing of meat, fish and other foods of animal origin
02 03	Wastes from fruit, vegetables, cereals, edible oils, cocoa, coffee, tea and tobacco preparation and processing; conserve production; yeast and yeast extract production, molasses preparation and fermentation.
02 05	Wastes from the dairy products industry
02 06	Wastes from the baking and confectionery industry
02 07	Wastes from the production of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (except, coffee, tea and cocoa)
03 03	Wastes from pulp, paper and cardboard production and processing
04 02	Wastes from the textile industry
06 10	Wastes from the manufacture, formulation, supply and use (MFSU) of nitrogen chemicals, nitrogen chemical processes and fertiliser manufacture
07 01	Wastes from the manufacture, formulation, supply and use (MFSU) of basic organic chemicals
07 05	Wastes from MFSU of pharmaceuticals
07 06	Wastes from the MFSU of fats, grease, soaps, detergents, disinfectants and cosmetics
10 01	Wastes from power stations and other combustion plants
10 13	Waste from manufacture of cement, lime and plaster and articles and products made from them
15 01	Packaging (including separately collected municipal packaging wastes)
16 03	Off-specification batches and unused products
16 10	Aqueous liquid waste
17 02	Construction and demolition waste wood
17 08	Gypsum waste
19 05	Wastes from aerobic treatment of waste
19 08	Wastes from waste water treatment plants not otherwise specified
19 09	Wastes from the preparation of water intended for human consumption or water for industrial use
19 12	Wastes from mechanical treatment of waste (wood waste)
20 01	Municipal wastes (separately collected fractions) except 15 01
20 02	Garden and park wastes (including cemetery waste)
20 03 (Note 1)	Other municipal wastes
	Total

Note 1: Includes List of Waste entries 20 03 04 (septic tank sludge) and 20 03 06 (waste from sewage cleaning) which are excluded from municipal waste reporting as per Eurostat guidance.