

## Circular economy country profile 2024 – Kosovo\*



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## Contents

Introduction.....	2
Kosovo– facts and figures.....	4
Existing policy framework .....	6
Dedicated national and/or regional and/or local strategy, roadmap or action plan for circular economy .....	6
Circular economy policy elements included in other policies.....	7
Monitoring and targets .....	8
Assessment of circular economy performance.....	8
Circular economy monitoring frameworks and their indicators beyond the ones from Eurostat.....	8
Circular economy targets .....	8
Innovative approaches and good practices.....	8
Examples of public policy initiatives (national, regional or local) .....	8
Examples of private policy initiatives (sectoral) .....	9
The way forward.....	10
Identifying and addressing barriers and challenges.....	10
Future policy plans .....	11

## Introduction

The European Commission requested the EEA to produce EU country profiles that offer an updated view of the following elements:

- what circular economy policies are being implemented at a national level with a particular focus on elements that go beyond EU mandatory elements, and
- what are best practices with a focus on policy innovation.

With the EU Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP 2020) "the Commission [...] encourages Member States to adopt or update their national circular economy strategies, plans and measures in the light of its ambition".

These country profiles originate in the work leading to the EEA More from less report (2016)<sup>1</sup>, that presented an overview of approaches to material resource efficiency and to circular economy in thirty-two European countries. The More from Less report was followed by the 2019 EEA Report 'Resource efficiency and the circular economy in Europe 2019 – even more from less: An overview of the policies, approaches and targets of 32 European countries'<sup>2</sup>.

It presented an updated and extended assessment of approaches and identified trends, similarities and new directions taken by countries in the connected policy areas of resource efficiency and the circular economy.

These reports, comprising a compilation of extensive survey responses from countries, were accompanied by 32 country profiles.

In the second quarter of 2022 a new survey with questions and guidelines was launched. Based on information reported by the Eionet network, in particular, the Eionet Group on Circular Economy and Resource Use, and after review and editing by the European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use (ETC CE), the 30 2022 CE country profiles<sup>3</sup> were published alongside the EEA report 'Circular Economy policy innovation and good practice in Member States'<sup>4</sup> (2022).

These 2024 CE country profiles are an update of the 2022 ones and based on the responses of 29 countries to the survey questions and guidelines that were launched in March 2024. The information in the countries' responses was again reviewed and edited by the European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use. A selection of Eurostat data was made to further complement these country profiles.

The main objectives of these assessments and its updates are to: • stimulate exchange of information and share good practice examples among country experts; • support policymakers in Eionet countries, the European institutions and international organisations by providing an updated catalogue of circular economy actions being undertaken in European countries.

This circular economy country profile is based on information reported by the Eionet network and, in particular, the Eionet Group members on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy in the second quarter of 2024. Proposals for the further development or amendment of policies represent the view of the reporting country. For Kosovo, all input was provided by the Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency, part of the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning And Infrastructure of Kosovo. The information was reviewed and edited by the European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use. A selection of Eurostat data was made to further complement this country profile.

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<sup>1</sup> [More from less – material resource efficiency in Europe – European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://www.euro.peco.eu/en/more-from-less-material-resource-efficiency-in-europe)



<sup>2</sup> [Resource efficiency and the circular economy in Europe 2019 – European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://www.euro.peco.eu/en/resource-efficiency-and-the-circular-economy-in-europe-2019)

<sup>3</sup> [Country profiles on Circular Economy in Europe – Eionet Portal \(europa.eu\)](https://www.eionet.europa.eu/portal/en/country-profiles-on-circular-economy-in-europe)

<sup>4</sup> [draft-report-for-dg-env\\_final.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

The information is current as of September 2024, when members of Eionet verified the content of this profile.

## Kosovo– facts and figures

	<p><b>GDP:</b> EUR 9.7 billion (in 2023)</p>
	<p><b>Structure of the economy (2023):</b>  Agriculture: 9.7 %  Industry: 32.8 %  Services: 57.5 %</p>
	<p><b>Surface area:</b> 10,877 square kilometres</p>
	<p><b>Population:</b> 1,798,188 (in 2021)</p>

Note: all definitions and metadata used in this profile are taken, as shown, from Eurostat

Source: Eurostat datasets, EU27 2021 and EU27 2023 (accessed 21 August 2024)

**Table 1: Waste generation in Kosovo 2021** ([https://www.ammk-rks.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/Raporti%20i%20mbeturinave%20komunale%20p%C3%ABr%20vitin%202021\\_%20eng\(1\).pdf](https://www.ammk-rks.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/Raporti%20i%20mbeturinave%20komunale%20p%C3%ABr%20vitin%202021_%20eng(1).pdf), and 2022 (Report of municipal waste management in Kosovo-2022 , KEPA, not yet published )

Years	Mixed municipal waste collected/ ton	Waste generation per capita (kg/day)
2021	469,389.94	0.69
2022	462,809.79	0.66

**Table 2: Waste collection services in Kosovo: Coverage of the total land surface (%) in the years 2021 and 2022**

2021	90.0%
2022	95.2%

**Table 3: Composition of collected waste (%) in Kosovo in 2022** (Source: Study performed by Environmental Sustainable Solution "ESS L.L.C" in 2022 with the support of GIZ, commissioned by the Department of Environment, not yet published)

Organic waste	30.4%
Green waste	4.5%
Tetra Pak	2.6%
Plastic	19.6%
Paper/cardboard	15.1%

<b>Textile</b>	4.8%
<b>Metals</b>	1.8%
<b>Glass</b>	5.5%
<b>Wood</b>	1.5%
<b>Construction and demolition waste</b>	3.1%
<b>Hazardous waste</b>	0.2%
<b>Diapers</b>	4.0%
<b>Other waste</b>	6.9%

## Existing policy framework

### Dedicated national and/or regional and/or local strategy, roadmap or action plan for circular economy

Kosovo has approved “**Kosovo Integrated Waste Management Strategy (2021- 2030) and Action Plan (2021-2023)**”, on 28.05.2021” The strategy<sup>5</sup> includes 4 strategic objectives:

- Strategic objective 1: Develop a new generation of integrated waste management services and infrastructure.
- Strategic objective 2: Professionalise the waste management and recycling sector.
- Strategic objective 3: Strengthen regulation and control in the waste management sector by filling gaps and clarifying implementation mechanisms.
- Strategic objective 4; Promote the values and practices of a Circular Economy.

The action plan (2021-2023) for the implementation of the strategy included following implemented actions in 2021:

- Communicating the Strategy to interested parties and public
- Implement campaign 2020-2022 including publishing of outcomes.
- Translate necessary labelling requirements into national regulations
- Home composting for households:  
In 2022, the EU/GIZ distributed a total of 1858 home composting devices in various municipalities of Kosovo, while the target was only 1500 composting devices. Also, with the support of EU/GIZ - the Composting Center in the municipality of Pristina has become functional since July 2022, which will be improving the existing situation
- Promoting the values and practices of a circular economy

In 2022, according to the plan, the following activities were to be realized:

- Develop and implement necessary regulations and schemes for packaging waste based on EPR.- [Partially implemented]
- Develop and implement necessary regulations and schemes for WEEE batteries, ELV, waste oils, tyres based on EPR.- [Not developed so far]
- Implementing campaign 2022 including publishing of outcomes. [Partially implemented]

From the monitoring of the action plan for 2021-2023, a first Progress report for 2021-2022 was prepared, which is not published online.

The implementation campaign for the years 2024-2026 is foreseen in the Action Plan 2024-2026, which is still an unpublished draft.

Kosovo Integrated Waste Management Strategy 2021-2030, along with the **Action Plan for 2024-2026**, is currently undergoing review and was open for public discussion till 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 ([2024\\_7aa5103a-bcec-4ac0-9fa9-26dea4856802.DOCX \(live.com\)](#))

Within the Integrated Waste Management Strategy, the circular economy has been incorporated into Strategic objective 4. The modifications pertaining to the circular economy, compared to the current strategy, are outlined below:

- Support waste prevention and improved resource efficiency;
- Increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates;

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<sup>5</sup> [KOSOVO INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY \(2021-2030\) AND ACTION PLAN \(2021-2023\) \(rks-gov.net\)~ActDetail.aspx \(rks-gov.net\)](#)



- Raise awareness of the importance and benefits of proper waste management and recycling and stimulate behaviour change;
- Increase involvement of economic actors and educational and research institutions in dissemination and application of circular practices and innovations.

A **new initiative** currently under development is the **DRS-Deposit Return System**, which will be implemented across the entire territory of Kosovo from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025 onwards. This system will facilitate the return of PVC bottles ranging from 250 ml to 2 l, as well as glass bottles and cans.

The regulation outlined in Administrative Instruction (QRK) No. 07/2023<sup>6</sup>, concerning Packaging and Packaging Waste, addresses **the establishment of the DRS-Deposit Return System and regulates the use of plastic bags** and has been applied since its approval on August 25, 2023.

To date, **no municipality has fully embraced the circular economy system yet**, except for isolated instances involving **organic waste treatment and household composting**. This organic waste treatment has been facilitated by the donation of bins by local institutions and grants.

### Circular economy policy elements included in other policies

Circular economy policy element	Weblink to policy
Implementation plans and prevention programmes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kosovo Integrated Waste Management Strategy (2021-2030) and Action Plan (2021-2023)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ActDetail.aspx (rks-gov.net)</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan, 2023</li> </ul>	<a href="https://mmphi.rks-gov.net/Document/Documents?type=3">https://mmphi.rks-gov.net/Document/Documents?type=3</a> (in Albanian)
- Local waste management plans <sup>7</sup>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative Instruction No. 07/2023 on Packaging and Packaging Wastes,</li> </ul>	<a href="https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/02.ADMINISTRATIVE-INSTRUCTION-GRK-NO.-072023-ON-PACKAGING-AND-PACKAGING-WASTES..pdf">https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/02.ADMINISTRATIVE-INSTRUCTION-GRK-NO.-072023-ON-PACKAGING-AND-PACKAGING-WASTES..pdf</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DRS System</li> </ul>	has not been published yet, it will be operational in the beginning of 2025
Climate policy in climate change strategy 2019- 2028 <sup>8</sup>	<a href="https://qzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=29356">https://qzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=29356</a>
Support the establishment of reuse and repair centres in the National Waste Prevention Programme	Under development

<sup>6</sup> <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/02.ADMINISTRATIVE-INSTRUCTION-GRK-NO.-072023-ON-PACKAGING-AND-PACKAGING-WASTES..pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The practice of waste composting has not yet gained traction in Kosovo. Initial endeavours at the municipal level have been undertaken in the Municipality of Pristina. In March 2023, the operationalization of the Composting Centre was initiated under the management of the Public Enterprise "Hortikultura". According to the local waste management plans, we have independent initiatives from the municipalities for the treatment of organic waste

<sup>8</sup> The strategy aims to address climate change and adaptation issues in development and regional processes, empowering them to tackle climate change challenges effectively. Among the objectives of the Climate Change Strategy, initiatives such as promoting the use of biomass for energy centers and industrial cogeneration, producing biogas from animal waste in livestock, etc. One of the activity objectives of this strategy is waste management, including separate waste collection and recycling, along with the utilization of hazardous solid waste (such as household waste and tires) as alternative fuel in industries.

## Monitoring and targets

### Assessment of circular economy performance

Over the past five years, Kosovo has achieved significant progress in waste collection management. Our coverage has increased by 72%, now reaching 92% of the entire territory for waste collection. Previously, there were approximately 2,500 small and medium-sized illegal landfills; today, there are only 746 illegal dumpsites. The Integrated Waste Management Strategy for 2021-2030<sup>9</sup>, along with the action plans for 2021-2023 have been developed and approved and the development of the action plan for 2024-2026 is in process.

A working committee, established by the Ministry of Environment, oversees the implementation of activities in alignment with the objectives of the Integrated Waste Management Strategy 2021-2030. This committee is also tasked with monitoring the implementation of strategic objective 4, which focuses on the circular economy.

As for employment in waste management, there are precise figures for the number of employees in each municipality. However, accurate data regarding staff employed solely for circular economy initiatives is currently unavailable.

### Circular economy monitoring frameworks and their indicators beyond the ones from Eurostat

The Ministry of Environment has established the working Committee for the monitoring and implementation of the Integrated Waste Management Strategy 2021-20230 and the Action Plan 2021-2023 and 2024-2026.

Currently, as a monitoring indicator for urban waste, we have the amount collected and deposited, as well as the fragmentation of the type of waste.

### Circular economy targets

The main objective for the circular economy "Promote the values and practices of a Circular Economy", is included in the Kosovo Integrated Waste Management Strategy (2021-2030) and the 2024-2026 action plan. This objective includes **4 specific sub-objectives**.

1. Support waste prevention and improved resource efficiency,
2. Increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates,
3. Raise awareness of the importance and benefits of proper waste management and recycling and stimulate behaviour change,
4. Increase involvement of economic actors and educational and research institutions in dissemination and application of circular practices and innovations.

The specific objectives will be realized according to the Action Plan for 2024-2026 and 2027-2030, which have deadlines for realization and a certain budget.

## Innovative approaches and good practices

### Examples of public policy initiatives (national, regional or local)

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<sup>9</sup> [KOSOVO INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY \(2021-2030\) AND ACTION PLAN \(2021-2023\) \(rks-gov.net\)](#)

→ *Good practice example: Circular business models and Industrial symbiosis*

The concept of the circular economy is relatively new in Kosovo. It was introduced following the approval of the Kosovo Integrated Waste Management Strategy (2021-2030) in 2021. During this period, **Guideline on Circular Business Models** in Kosovo has been developed<sup>10</sup>. This document aims to be a guideline providing general guidance towards the development and adoption of circular business models (CBMs) in Kosovo. Description on generic principles on CBMs, their characteristics and basic functioning. Introduction to alternative business models, including industrial symbiosis and industrial ecology.

→ *Good practice example: Financial support programmes targeting CE*

The current (April 2024) revision of the Kosovo Integrated Waste Management Strategy (2021-2030) and the Action Plan for 2024-2026 entails a **significant increase in the budget allocated to the circular economy** for the years 2024-2030, amounting to approximately 77 million Euros in total.

The action plan for 2024-2026 includes an investment of about 41 million euros, especially for the circular economy, from the total amount of 77 million euros.

→ *Good practice example: Producer /supplier responsibility and Institutional and regulatory arrangements to support the transition towards a resource-efficient CE*

While private operators engage in waste collection, recycling, and treatment based on their interests, the establishment of a comprehensive circular economy system is still in progress and remains limited to selected cases. The CE in public policy is still in its infancy/first stages of development in Kosovo.

An exemplary initiative, expected to be operational by 2025, is the implementation of a deposit return system for PVC bottles, as well as glass bottles and cans, involving manufacturers, importers, and retailers. Additionally, there are plans to enforce a ban on disposable bags.

→ *Good practice example: Product-related policies, including on the R-strategies (repair, reuse, remanufacturing, etc)*

A study conducted in 2023, and supported by GIZ, entitled "**Circular economy in Kosovo**", **Opportunities for reusable packaging systems and women's participation**<sup>11</sup>, can be used as the results of a barometer for the Circular Economy. The comparative analysis conducted in this study assessed the readiness of three cities in Kosovo – Prishtina, Prizren, and Vushtrri – to implement reuse solutions within the packaging sector, with a focus on their adaptability and potential. Each city exhibits unique characteristics and initiatives that contribute to its suitability for promoting circular practices.

## Examples of private policy initiatives (sectoral)

Additionally, there are some examples from economic operators and NGOs, such as the collection, sorting, reuse, and treatment of used clothing, as well as plastic recycling initiatives, among others.

→ *Good practice example Public private partnership*

According to the Kosovo Integrated Waste Management Strategy (2021-2030), the circular economy model will receive support from the Government of Kosovo through various activities, including:

- National Action Plan for single use plastics (to be adopted by 2024<sup>12</sup>);
- Promotion, organisation of home composting;

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<sup>10</sup> <https://mmphi.rks-gov.net/Document/Documents?type=3> (in Albanian)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2023-en-kosovo-reusable-packaging-systems-and-women-participation.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://mmphi.rks-gov.net/Document/Announcements?year=2024&pageNumber=3>

- Establishing mechanisms and incentives to support development of repair and reuse networks for discarded products and/or of their components;
- Establish obligatory separate waste collection requirements for municipal waste fractions like recyclables, textiles, household hazardous waste;
- Awareness campaigns, interest and positive shift in behaviour to support reduction of litter, the reduction in waste sent of disposal, recycling;
- Develop environmental-related curricula at each key educational stage in schools;
- Establish Innovation Grant system, Specific guidance on eligibility criteria and application processes for Innovation Grants;
- Create a centre to support businesses (especially SMEs) with expert advice consultations for the transition to a circular economy.

➔ *Good practice example: New business models*

In terms of the business model, our country is focused on 6 priorities according to the guideline of Circular Business Models in Kosovo<sup>13</sup>.

**The focus of the business model of the circular economy in Kosovo are:**

- The food system;
- The forest system;
- The manufacturing sector;
- The creative sector;
- The retail sector;
- The construction sector.

One of the main socio-economic opportunities of the circular economy in Kosovo is the **potential for job creation**. The implementation of circular business models can create new jobs in waste management, recycling, and the development of sustainable products.

## The way forward

### Identifying and addressing barriers and challenges

The **biggest challenges** faced by small and medium-sized enterprises in Kosovo in terms of the circular economy are:

- lack of knowledge and skills related to green practices;
- innovative pursuits have high costs;
- there are high barriers to financing.

The **lack of infrastructure and technological capabilities** is a significant socio-economic barrier to the implementation of circular economy in Kosovo.

**The promotion of circular economy in Kosovo requires coordination that involves multiple stakeholders, including government, financial institutions, businesses, and civil society organizations.**

Kosovo is striving for economic stability and is actively advancing towards the adoption of new regional business models. A newly drafted **guidance document** serves as a practical example **for the integration of Circular Business Models in Kosovo**<sup>14</sup>. This initiative is backed by the EU4Green project<sup>15</sup>, that has a

<sup>13</sup> <https://mmphi.rks-gov.net/Document/Documents?type=3> (in Albanian)

<sup>14</sup> [https://mmphi.rks-gov.net/Document/Documents?type=3\(in English\)](https://mmphi.rks-gov.net/Document/Documents?type=3(in%20English))

<sup>15</sup> <https://eu4green.eu/economy/kosovo/>

collaborative endeavour to advocate for sustainable economic practices aligned with environmental objectives.

These innovative business models diverge from the conventional linear economy approach by prioritizing resource sustainability through reduction, reuse, and recycling. The implementation of such models holds significant importance for Kosovo and is expected to be implemented effectively in the coming years.

### Future policy plans

**The Digital Agenda**<sup>16</sup>, an initiative spearheaded by the European Union, has been extended to include the 6 Western Balkan Countries<sup>17</sup>.

Its primary objective is to enable citizens in the region to fully leverage the advantages of digital transformation. By committing to the Digital Agenda, citizens will acquire the necessary skills to thrive in the evolving economy, leading to the modernization of public administrations, enhanced cybersecurity measures, improved connectivity, and a more favourable business environment.

In the realm of the circular economy, **the deposit return system will be digitized**, covering the entire country's territory.

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<sup>16</sup> [Digital agenda for Europe | Fact Sheets on the European Union | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/IP\\_18\\_4242](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/IP_18_4242)

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