



EWWR good practices and case studies

1. Details of Action:

EWWR Organiser: WASTE AGENCY OF CATALONIA
Country/Region: CATALONIA (SPAIN)
Name of nominated project developer: ARGENTONA TOWN COUNCIL
Name of nominated action: PROJECT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PAYMENT SYSTEM FOR WASTE GENERATION (FAIR TAX SYSTEM). Activity: Citizen participation sessions
Place: SALO DE PEDRA
Town: ARGENTONA
Region: CATALONIA
Country: SPAIN
Year: 2009

2. Select the correct participant category:

- Administration/public authority
- Association/NGO
- Business/Industry
- Educational establishment
- Other (e.g. hospital, retirement home, cultural centre, etc.)

3. Please select the theme(s) highlighted in the action:

- Too Much Waste
- Better Consumption
- Better Production
- A Life for Products
- Less Waste thrown Away

4. Type of Action

- Action open to general public
- Action open to target group
- Action based on the production of communication tools
- Other, please specify:

5. Please indicate the date(s) of the action:

- 21st November
- 22nd November
- 23rd November
- 24th November
- 25th November
- 26th November
- 27th November
- 28th November
- 29th November



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6. Please give a detailed and precise description of the nominated action:

Citizen participation sessions were held in Argentona to explain the implementation and operation of the first waste generation payment system in a municipality of Catalonia. With the aim of explaining and debating the project for the implementation of a fair tax payment system in the town, open sessions were organised for citizens and business owners. The first section of each session was used to explain the background and reasons behind the decision to implement a door-to-door collection system and the results obtained since its implementation, along with the reasons for the commissioning of an implementation study on waste generation payment systems. Last of all, an explanation was given of how the fair tax project has performed (results of the pilot scheme since October 2009). In the second section of each session citizens were invited to express any doubts, opinions and queries regarding the fair tax system. Each session concluded with a plea to everyone to participate in the smooth running of the fair tax system that will come into force throughout the town at the end of January 2010 as a pioneering action in Catalonia.

The implementation of the waste generation payment system in Argentona has been structured into the following stages: 1. Information Stage (October 2008 to December 2009): An information campaign was implemented with a permanent citizen assistance office and mobile information points throughout the town where environmental consultants informed citizens and business owners of the pilot scheme. Information leaflets and free rubbish bags were handed out, and banners and posters were produced. Meanwhile, 8 citizen participation information sessions were held during this period up until November 2009 in order to clear up doubts and consider potential improvements for the implementation of the system. An active follow-up process was also carried out of those who had taken part in all the information sessions to monitor their progress and participation in the pilot scheme of the waste generation payment system. Over the course of the year workshops were held during Recycling festivals on how to fold packaging properly; information leaflets were distributed in schools so that the waste prevention message could reach all family members; an exhibition was created to explain the nature of the new waste payment system; a participation venue was set up where citizens could express their thoughts on the Fair Tax and where they could take a photograph to illustrate their thoughts; and an Internet blog was set up to encourage citizen participation and to publicise all the actions of the Fair Tax project.

2. Pilot scheme stage of the implementation of the fair tax system (October 2009 to December 2009):

Implementation, at no cost to the taxpayer, of the pilot scheme for the door-to-door collection of the rubbish (refuse) fraction and the packaging fraction (plastic, TetraBriks...) using the special bags provided free of charge by the Town Council for the waste generation payment system. The remaining fractions continued to be processed as usual: the glass fraction through street containers for selective collection while the individual bin organic fraction (with biodegradable bag or no bag), the paper fraction and the specific collection of nappies and incontinence pads (for the elderly and small children) were all processed through the door-to-door collection system. For the first few months all rubbish was collected, whether in the special bags of the waste generation payment system or in the wrong bags. However, citizens who had mistakenly thrown out rubbish in unsuitable bags received a home visit from an environmental consultant to inform them of the new collection system. Failing that, the said citizens were required to pay a visit to the information office (with extended afternoon opening hours for citizen assistance). 3 months after the start of the pilot scheme, rubbish thrown out in the wrong bags was not collected for the first 24 hours and the responsible home was informed once again. One of the aspects to improve upon is the system for distributing the special bags of the service since at the moment they can only be obtained from municipal facilities.

3. Stage for the definitive implementation of the waste generation payment system (January 2010): Tax for the rubbish collection service in 2009 was €151 per home. This year, with the implementation of the new system, it will drop to €95 since the treatment service of the rubbish and packaging fraction has been discounted. Homes and businesses will be taxed for the rubbish fraction and packaging fraction of the waste that they generate by paying a charge for the special bags. The cost of the bags depends on their capacity and will range from €0.35 to €1 for packaging bags and from €0.65 to €2.50 for rubbishbags, depending on whether they are for homes or businesses. Other aspects that have been addressed are changes to bylaws, the security in emergency areas and the hearing of appeals and complaints by citizens. Throughout the period meetings have been held with the main associations, such as the Shopkeepers' Union, in order to promote and encourage their waste reduction initiatives, e.g. shopkeepers in the area will change packaging and will distribute both biodegradable bags for the selective collection of the organic fraction and reusable shopping baskets.

7. Please describe the originality of the action:



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This action is original and exemplary for several reasons:

- The waste generation payment system is the first to be implemented in a Catalan town. European studies and previous actions in the town indicate that substantial waste reduction will be achieved through the application of this fair tax system. The town of Argentona has been a pioneer in several aspects: thanks to its implementation of the door-to-door collection system, waste generation has been reduced by 16%; a rubbish recycling rate of 52.7% has been obtained; and an organic fraction purity percentage of 97.8% has been achieved, one of the highest in Catalonia.
- The fair tax system aims to treat people fairly and reasonably: it does not include the collection of nappies and incontinence pads in the rubbish fraction in order not to charge families with small children or the elderly; instead, these items are collected daily in a separate bag as part of the door-to-door system.
- It is aimed at encouraging citizen participation: 8 open meetings have been held (one of which coincided with the European Waste Prevention Week) to motivate and inform citizens or business owners directly; an active follow-up process has been carried out of those who have attended the information sessions with the purpose of gathering proposals for improving the system; information stands have been set up throughout the town to distribute information and special bags; home visits have been made to inform taxpayers directly and clear up doubts; citizen assistance office hours have been extended; and an Internet blog has been set up with information and activities on the fair tax, enabling citizens to participate freely in the issue.
- The initial data from the fair tax pilot scheme indicates that it will be an effective system in respect of changing the consumption and shopping habits of families and business owners while making them responsible for their own waste production and reduction, since the amount of waste generated by taxpayers has a direct proportional effect on the cost of the service, i.e. use and consumption are directly linked to costs, as occurs with telephone, water or gas bills.
- An economic incentive is provided for the retail outlets, business and families that make the greatest effort to reduce waste, reuse items and separate waste properly. This measure will make people aware of their own waste generation and of the economic repercussions of contributing to preserving the environment, as well as enabling them to discover waste prevention measures that are easy to implement (responsible shopping, responsible consumption, etc.).

8. Please describe the target audience and how the action motivated its public/target audience:

The mobilisation of citizen participation was achieved through the organisation, from October 2008, of 4 open sessions for citizens and 4 sessions targeted specifically at any business owners who wished to attend. The final talk/debate, bringing the citizen information stage to a close, was held as part of the 2009 European Waste Prevention Week in order to make the most of the synergy and the significant publicity platform represented by this special Week throughout Catalan society. The aforementioned sessions have reached a large number of people, providing them with advice and useful information for dealing with rubbish in their homes and/or businesses, in such a way that they are able to manage their rubbish tax.

At the same time, the system has organised home visits to clear up doubts and occasional errors. Citizen assistance office hours have been extended and mobile information points have been set up around the town. An Internet blog for citizen participation has been set up, along with a citizen assistance office. Until December 2009 special bags were distributed free of charge as part of the pilot scheme, making citizens familiar with the collection procedure of the rubbish fraction and packaging fraction.

9. Please indicate the number of people who participated in the action:

75% of the population has participated in the citizen participation sessions and the pilot scheme. 30 people took part in the final session held during the European Week for Waste Reduction. The session served to clear up doubts and issues concerning the system and, above all, to encourage active involvement in starting up the new fair tax model at the end of January 2010, with no delay expected.

10. What lasting impact does the action propose to have in terms of commitment to waste reduction?



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The waste generation payment system is applicable to the rubbish (refuse) fraction and the packaging fraction. The affected families and businesses are currently adapting to the system and require information, advice and ideas that help them to reduce waste.

Waste generation has dropped by 16% since the implementation of the door-to-door collection system. Therefore, the prospects of waste reduction look very good, taking into account that it may now lead to a reduction in costs for taxpayers.

Other data backing up the forecast of a real impact on waste production includes the increase that has been observed in the selective collection percentage, which has risen from 15% to 52.7% of rubbish following the implementation of door-to-door collection. The target percentage with the implementation of the fair tax system is 76%.

Another revealing piece of data is that the town of Argentona has one of the highest organic fraction purity levels in all Catalonia, with 97.8%. Meanwhile, Argentona generates an annual total of 6,730 tonnes of waste, of which almost half goes straight to the incinerator, generating a very high environmental and economic cost. The implementation of a fair tax system aims to reduce this percentage to 24%. We will observe a reduction in packaging and it is estimated that the percentage of waste collected in the form of packaging will rise from 5.1% to 7.58%, due to the fact that the rubbish (refuse) fraction is more heavily taxed than the packaging fraction.

11. Explain how this action may be replicated in other countries/regions throughout Europe:

This system can be fully replicated in any other European country or region since it is a straightforward system that uses the door-to-door collection system, the only difference being the payment form of the rubbish collection tax.

This system can be implemented both in private homes and businesses or retail outlets. It is a system with a positive approach that rewards those who generate less waste and who best separate their rubbish. It is a responsible and fair system since it directly links waste generation to the costs of the service, transferring responsibility for municipal waste treatment to its producers, whether private homes or businesses.

Any town can implement the fair tax system. All that is required is to carry out a process of participation and awareness-raising through talks or information points in order to give ideas on waste reduction through voluntary actions. After this it is possible to move onto economic incentive systems to reward good environmental behaviour.

At the same time it is necessary to reach a consensus with citizens on the application of the new model. Bylaws and fiscal regulations must be adapted to ensure that payment for waste generation enjoys proper legal coverage. Participating in the European Week for Waste Reduction has boosted the publicity of the project for implementing the Fair Tax system in society since it is a platform for informing and encouraging citizens, aimed at raising awareness on the priority issue of waste treatment, i.e. Waste prevention.



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