



Identifying the Sources and Scale of Plastic in Compost Derived from Household and Commercial Food Waste

Foster Environmental is delighted to announce commencement of this project. Instead of focussing on the end of the process to identify plastics, our concept of this project is to comprehensively assess incoming food waste feedstocks to identify and quantify both visible and 'invisible' plastic.

RECOMMEND SOLUTIONS
TO ELIMINATE HIDDEN
PLASTIC IN FOOD WASTE

LABORATORY TESTING OF
PRODUCTS TO DETERMINE
IF THEY CONTAIN PLASTIC



LITERATURE REVIEW

ENGAGE WITH
STAKEHOLDERS

FOOD WASTE CHARACTERISATION
STUDIES TO IDENTIFY PLASTIC PRODUCTS

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 **epa**Research

In a recent study for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop an updated compost quality standard and a new digestate quality standard, it was determined that the greatest risk to achieving the standard is the contamination of the input feedstock (Foster and Prasad, 2021).

Due to the practicalities of testing, the minimum measurable size of impurities in composts and digestates globally is 2mm. Since they cannot currently be economically and efficiently extracted or identified, any impurities smaller than 2mm present in compost and digestate will be released into the environment.

In order to best develop strategies to eliminate/reduce contamination before it reaches the organic recycling system it is essential to know exactly what the sources of contamination are, e.g. specific packaging formats and their quantity. Furthermore, comparatively little is known about the plastic embedded in traditionally targeted waste streams. The best known of these specific waste streams are tea bags and coffee pods and the labels stuck onto fruit and vegetables.

This project is funded under the EPA Research Programme 2021-2030. The EPA Research Programme is a Government of Ireland initiative funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.

Stakeholders engaged in the project:

- Food retailers
- Food producers
- Compost & biogas plants
- Compost and biogas trade associations from around the world
- Waste companies
- Local authorities
- Policy makers

The project lead is Foster Environmental supported by Tony Breton Consulting.

Join the project twitter account for updates- <https://twitter.com/ISPIC2>

Visit project webpage for updates - <https://foster.ie/food-waste/>

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Notes:

EPA Research 2030 is the ten-year high-level framework for the EPA's research programming (2021- 2030), designed to be agile, responsive and flexible. EPA Research 2030 thematic structure comprises four interconnected hubs (Addressing climate change needs, facilitating a green and circular economy, delivering a healthy environment, Protecting and restoring our natural environment) that bring an integrated and cross-sectoral approach, enabling holistic management and protection of our environment.

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