

Organics Management Guide Submission

Name: Somnath Mondal

Title: Sr. Engineer

Organization: E Ink Corp

Email Address: somnath.mondal@eink.com

Website: www.eink.com

Select the Primary Entity Type Please identify the category that best represents your project: Brands and Manufacturers

Questions:

- 1. Background Provide context for the program, project, or policy — why it was developed, when it began, and the problem or opportunity it addresses.**

The organic recycling and compost program was formally launched in 2024, initiated by a group of environmentally conscious employees who recognized the need to strengthen waste-reduction practices within the workplace. This effort builds upon the company's earlier sustainability action—the K-Cup recycling program, which has been operating since 2021—and expands the scope of circular waste management across office operations. This combined initiative was developed to address several key challenges and opportunities:

1. **Reduce Landfilled Organics:** Divert food scraps and compostable materials away from the trash stream to lower the organization's overall environmental footprint.
2. **Demonstrate Practical Circularity:** Integrate composting as a visible, everyday example of circular resource use within office operations.
3. **Improve Measurement and Reporting:** Transition from estimating organic waste diversion to collecting weighed, measurable data that supports more accurate sustainability reporting.
4. **Enhance Waste Diversion Through Established Streams:** Strengthen engagement and increase landfill diversion by pairing the new compost program with the long-standing K-Cup recycling initiative (since 2021).

2. Summary: Briefly describe the initiative, including its goals, location, and primary outcomes.

E Ink implemented a source-separated organics collection program across its break rooms and kitchenettes, using standardized bin sets and clear signage to guide proper sorting. Food scraps collected in these areas are sent for composting through site-specific haulers, while a parallel collection stream captures single-serve coffee capsules (K-Cups) for specialized recycling. All collected materials are consolidated in back-of-house staging areas for routine pickup.

The initiative's goals include reducing landfilled waste, improving circularity within office operations, and strengthening data accuracy. Tracking initially relied on invoice-based estimates and later transitioned to weighed receipts when available, enabling more precise measurement of diversion outcomes.

3. Percent of Overall Diverted Material: If available, include data or estimates on the portion of the community or organization's total diverted material no longer associated with the waste stream that this program or policy addresses.

Based on available tracking data and reasonable operational estimates:

K-Cup Recycling: ~100% diversion

The single-serve coffee capsules collected through the established recycling stream are fully diverted from landfill, as all captured materials are routed to a specialized recycling vendor.

Food Waste (Organics Composting): <50% diversion (estimated)

While organics collection has expanded across break rooms and kitchenettes, actual diversion is currently estimated at less than half of the total food waste generated. This is due to sorting variability, participation levels, and the ongoing transition from estimated to weighed data tracking.

4. Key Program Elements or Policy Provisions: Describe the structure and main components of your program or policy. Explain the investments origins (who, how much). Please include as many of the following elements as applicable: What types of materials are being managed? (e.g., surplus recoverable foods,

food scraps, wasted food. How are these materials managed? Who is responsible for managing them? (Organizations, agencies, businesses, or other entities) What products are generated, and how are they utilized or managed? (e.g., compost, animal feed, energy products) Who funds the management of these materials? (Funding sources, grants, partnerships) Who generates these materials? (Identify the origin: households, institutions, businesses, etc.)

The program is structured to manage organic materials and single-serve coffee waste generated within office operations, using a streamlined collection and oversight system. Its major components include:

1. Materials Managed--a) Food scraps and wasted food generated in office break rooms, kitchenettes, and shared eating areas. b) Single-serve coffee capsules (K-Cups), collected through a dedicated recycling stream.
 2. How Materials Are Managed--Employees deposit food scraps into dedicated organics bins, supported by standardized signage for correct sorting. K-Cups are collected separately in designated containers for recycling. Materials are transferred to back-of-house staging areas for consolidation and routine pickup by service vendors.
 3. Responsible Party --The program is managed and overseen by the Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) team, which coordinates hauler services, ensures correct bin placement, and oversees measurement and reporting.
 4. End Products and Their Utilization --Food scraps are processed into compost and in some cases are used for animal feed, depending on the site-specific hauler's capabilities. K-Cups are sent to specialized recyclers where materials such as plastic and aluminum are recovered for reuse.
 5. Funding and Investment --The program is funded by the organization, covering costs associated with bins, signage, collection services, and EH&S program oversight. The initiative originated from employee-driven environmental interest, and investments were incorporated into existing operational sustainability budgets rather than through external grants.
 6. Material Generators --The materials originate from office-based employees, including staff who use break rooms, kitchenettes, and single-serve coffee areas during daily operations.
- 5. Regulatory Impact: Describe how laws, policies, regulations, and/or code have affected your program or project. This may include positive, negative, or neutral impacts. Consider noting which regulations apply, how they influenced**

implementation or operations, any challenges or barriers encountered, and how compliance requirements shaped program decisions.

The program operates within a generally supportive regulatory environment, and while no local or state mandates directly required its implementation, existing voluntary commitments and sustainability frameworks played an influential role. Notably, the organization's decision to sign the Zero Waste to Landfill (ZWtL) pledge strengthened internal alignment around waste-reduction goals and reinforced the importance of improving diversion practices. This commitment served as a guiding framework that shaped program design, including the adoption of source-separated organics, clear bin-standardization strategies, and expanded recycling streams such as K-Cups.

Because the initiative is largely employee-driven and voluntary rather than compliance-driven, regulatory impacts have been mostly positive or neutral. The ZWtL pledge encouraged proactive action, increased accountability, and supported a culture of environmental responsibility. It also influenced decisions to develop better measurement systems (transitioning from estimates to weighed data) and to ensure proper handling through certified haulers and recycling vendors to uphold the integrity of diversion claims.

Overall, while not prompted by mandatory regulations, the program's alignment with the ZWtL commitment and broader sustainability expectations helped shape its goals, operational structure, and continuous-improvement approach.

6. Measurable Increase in Supply: Include data or qualitative outcomes showing growth in collection, diversion, or reuse volumes if available.

Since the launch of the organics collection and K-Cup recycling program, data show a stable level of material collection from its inception. Although early diversion estimates relied on invoice-based approximations, the recent transition to real weighed data has revealed a clear and measurable decrease in reported waste. This fall reflects improved accuracy rather than a sudden change in program performance. Because the weighed-data system was implemented only recently, the team is currently awaiting additional data cycles to confirm long-term trends. Once more consistent weight-based records have accumulated, the organization will be able to conduct a more robust analysis and make better-informed decisions about future program adjustments, capacity needs, and opportunities for increased diversion.

7. Behavior Change: Describe whether the initiative resulted in measurable behavior change and explain how you determined this. If behavior change occurred, outline the strategies that proved most effective. Please include any available data or evidence that supports your findings.

Because the organics and K-Cup recycling initiative is still in its early stages, measurable behavior change is currently under evaluation. Initial observations indicate growing employee interest, especially following the introduction of standardized bin sets and clear compost signage in break rooms. Early engagement suggests that users are becoming more aware of proper sorting practices, but full adoption is still developing.

To encourage participation, the team implemented targeted strategies, including offering a compost bin purchase plan with discounted rate for family use. While quantitative behavior-change data is not yet available, early indicators suggest a positive shift.

As the program matures and weighed-data tracking becomes more consistent, the team will be able to better assess behavior change through metrics such as participation rates, contamination trends, and diversion improvements over time.

8. Benefits and Impacts (Economic, Environmental, and Social): Describe the economic, environmental, and social sustainability impacts of the program, policy, or initiative. This may include both positive and negative outcomes. You may address impacts such as costs or savings, job creation, waste reduction, emissions, resource conservation, community engagement, equity, or public health. Please include data or qualitative observations where available and note any trade-offs or challenges.

The initiative has generated meaningful environmental and social benefits, with additional economic impacts emerging as data collection improves.

Environmental Impacts:

- (a) Waste Reduction: The introduction of source-separated organics and K-Cup recycling significantly reduces materials sent to landfill, lowering overall waste volume and supporting the organization's Zero Waste to Landfill pledge.
- (b) Emissions Reduction: Diverting food scraps from landfill helps reduce methane generation, supporting broader climate-action goals.
- (c) Resource Conservation: Recycling K-Cups recovers plastics, aluminum, and coffee grounds, contributing to circular resource use. Composting food waste returns nutrients to soils, further closing material loops.

Social Impacts:

- (a) **Public Health and Well-Being:** Reduced landfill reliance contributes indirectly to improved air and environmental quality. Composting organic waste avoids the creation of odor- and pest-related issues associated with improper disposal.
- (b) **Employee Engagement:** The program encourages sustainable habits in daily routines and reinforces a culture of environmental responsibility within the workplace.
- (c) **Awareness and Education:** Standardized bin sets, signage, and communication efforts improve environmental literacy and help employees understand the impacts of their disposal behaviors.

Challenges and Trade-offs:

- (a) **Behavioral Consistency:** Achieving high participation and low contamination remains a challenge and requires continued employee engagement efforts.
- (b) **Data Gaps:** Some streams still rely on estimated rather than weighed data, presenting opportunities for further improvement in measurement accuracy.

9. How Stakeholder Buy-In Was Achieved: Explain how the program gained support from key stakeholders (e.g., government agencies, businesses, residents, nonprofits).

Stakeholder support for the organics and K-Cup recycling initiative was built through clear communication, visibility, and opportunities for participation. Early engagement efforts included town hall discussions, where employees were introduced to the goals of the program, the environmental benefits, and the practical steps required for successful implementation. These sessions also created space for questions and feedback, helping employees feel directly involved in shaping the initiative.

To reinforce day-to-day adoption, the team deployed consistent, easy-to-understand signage across break rooms and kitchenettes. Standardized labels and visual cues clarified what belongs in each bin, reducing confusion and supporting correct sorting behaviors. This combination of informational outreach and clear on-site guidance helped align employees, facility teams, and leadership around the program's goals, building shared ownership and strengthening overall participation.

10. Stakeholders' Perspectives and Dynamics at Play: Highlight collaboration dynamics, challenges, or differing stakeholder interests and how they were addressed.

Stakeholder engagement throughout the initiative reflected a mix of cooperation, learning curves, and varying levels of readiness. Overall, employees were partially cooperative, showing interest in the program's goals and acknowledging the environmental value of composting and recycling. Many stakeholders adapted quickly to the new sorting system, particularly those already motivated by sustainability efforts.

However, some individuals required additional reminders and ongoing reinforcement to consistently follow proper sorting behaviors. Differences in priorities, habits, and familiarity with waste-diversion practices occasionally led to contamination or inconsistent participation. These challenges highlighted the importance of maintaining visible signage, periodic communication, and informal check-ins to help reinforce expectations.

Despite the varying levels of engagement, the initiative benefited from a generally supportive culture. Clear communication, accessible guidance, and patience in addressing concerns helped maintain positive dynamics and gradually strengthen shared commitment to waste reduction and sustainability goals.

11. Lessons Learned: Share what worked well, what didn't, and recommendations for others seeking to replicate your approach.

1. Standardized bin sets and clear signage were highly effective in guiding correct sorting and reducing confusion.
2. Early engagement through town halls helped build initial awareness and gave employees a voice in shaping the program.
3. Transitioning from estimated to weighed data improved accuracy and helped track progress more meaningfully.
4. Inconsistent participation remained a challenge; some employees required repeated reminders or additional guidance.
5. Behavior change timelines were slower than anticipated, especially in busy areas where convenience competed with proper sorting.

Recommendation:

1. Invest early in communication and visibility, including consistent signage, demonstrations, and periodic reminders.

2. Use weighed data as soon as possible—it dramatically improves reporting accuracy and can help make the case for continued investment.
3. Monitor contamination regularly and address issues promptly with targeted outreach or signage updates.