



Barriers and behavioural drivers affecting food waste sorting in the restaurant sector.

A study by the Behavioural Insights Team for Avitem, 30 June 2025.

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Background and need

This study analyses the gaps between the requirements of the AGECE Act (2024) and bio-waste sorting practices in the restaurant, hotel and café (RHC) sector in the Alpes-Maritimes.

The region presents a diverse landscape: a variety of establishments (independent restaurants, chain hotels, seasonal venues), high tourist pressure, urban space constraints and a wide range of stakeholders. These factors complicate the implementation of effective sorting.

Unlike households, for whom the local authority must provide a bio-waste sorting solution, restaurant operators are themselves responsible for identifying and implementing a recovery solution, or for using a solution provided by a private service provider. This reality alters the analysis: rather than questioning the failure to adopt an identified sorting solution, the aim is to understand what hinders or facilitates the decision to adopt a sorting and recovery approach.

In this context, the CCI plays an active intermediary role: it disseminates information (webinars, short videos), trains professionals, trials sorting schemes with private service providers, and reports back on the difficulties encountered on the ground.

To supplement their already extensive knowledge of the sector, the partners (Avitem and the CCI) commissioned the BIT to carry out a rapid behavioural assessment, based on immersion within this target audience. The aim is to objectively assess findings from the field whilst prioritising a pragmatic approach, in order to:

- identify the specific barriers and drivers to the adoption of sorting and the recovery of bio-waste,
- formulate immediate and realistic courses of action for the partners (CCI, local authorities, service providers)



Key findings from the scoping phase



As producers of bio-waste, restaurant operators are subject to a regulatory obligation to sort and recover this waste stream (see next page). This obligation requires them to identify, select and implement a sorting and recovery solution, in particular by engaging specialist private service providers.

In this context, the behaviour required by the regulations (sorting and recycling bio-waste) relies entirely on the initiative of the professionals themselves.

From the outset, the central hypothesis was therefore as follows:

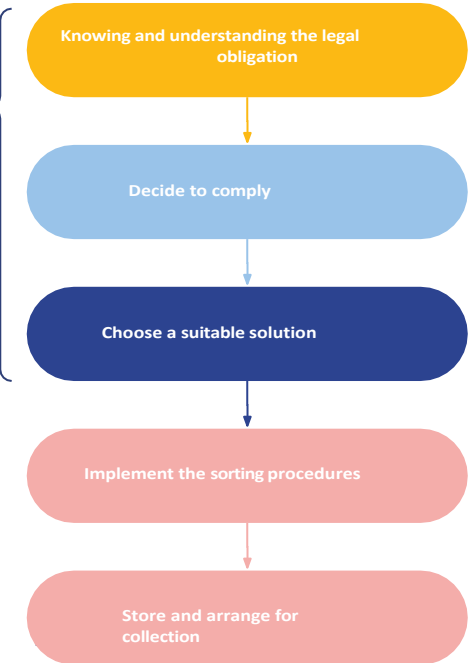
The behavioural issue does not lie so much in the barriers to sorting itself, or to the use of a single sorting solution.

Rather, it lies in the barriers to identifying and implementing a recovery solution for one's waste, generally provided by a private service provider.

This approach led to a shift in methodological focus:

- Focus on the decision-making process leading up to the act of sorting, in order to understand the reasons behind this failure to act in the face of their regulatory obligation. This change is reflected in the decision-making pathway model shown opposite.
- Identify the difficulties faced by restaurant owners in making this decision.
- Place this inaction within the context of growing economic pressure.

The report of this study is structured around this model and sets out, in the following pages, the behavioural barriers and drivers for each stage of the journey.



What the law says:

The AGECE Act: Article L. 541-21-1 of the Environment Code

- General principle: "Persons who produce or hold significant quantities of waste consisting mainly of bio-waste are required to implement sorting at source of this bio-waste and either on-site recovery; or separate collection of bio-waste to enable its recovery and, in particular, to promote high-quality land application."
- Extension of the obligation: "By 31 December 2023 at the latest, this obligation shall apply to all producers or holders of bio-waste, including local authorities in the context of public waste management services and private and public establishments that generate bio-waste."

What are the obligations for restaurant owners?

As producers of bio-waste, restaurant owners are directly affected by this obligation. Their responsibility extends across the entire life cycle of the bio-waste produced:

Sorting at source:

- Separate bio-waste from other waste streams directly in the kitchen or in preparation areas.
- Use specific, suitable containers (bins, dedicated containers).

Storage:

- Store bio-waste under hygienic and safe conditions, minimising nuisances (odours, pests).
- Adjust storage capacity to match the volume produced and the collection frequency.

Recovery (directly or via a supply chain):

- On-site recovery
- Recovery via a service provider

Justification:

- Be able to prove compliance with the law in the event of an inspection (contracts with service providers, monitoring records, etc.).

What are the obligations of local authorities?

The role of local authorities is distinct but complementary, focusing mainly on household waste and incentives:

Household and Similar Waste:

- To ensure the collection, sorting and treatment of bio-waste from households and activities whose waste is treated as household waste.
- Providing citizens with sorting and recycling solutions (individual or communal compost bins, recycling drop-off points).

Support and Incentive Role:

- To inform and raise awareness among professionals about legal obligations and existing solutions.
- Facilitate the development of local recycling schemes.
- Are NOT directly responsible for the collection of bio-waste from businesses (not treated as household waste), unless a specific policy is implemented locally and the quantity is considered to be treated as such.

The methodological approach

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A three-stage project



To carry out this rapid assessment, it was agreed with the project leaders to structure the study in three main stages, between April and June 2025, centred around a field immersion phase.

This immersion allowed the hypotheses arising from the scoping phase to be tested against on-the-ground realities and enabled concrete courses of action to emerge. Interviews and site visits enabled us to explore actual practices for sorting and recycling bio-waste, by gathering the views of a diverse range of stakeholders (property management companies, owners, managers, chefs, senior management) and by directly observing procedures, spatial organisation, and any potential points of friction.

Phase 1: Scoping

- 5 preliminary interviews with key stakeholders (CCI, hospitality industry unions, bio-waste collection and recovery service providers)
- A scoping workshop bringing together the project team and key stakeholders
- Two targeted benchmarks (France and international), focusing respectively on:
 - initiatives to encourage restaurant owners to implement a food waste sorting scheme
 - what local authorities have been able to put in place elsewhere to communicate with restaurant owners and support them in meeting this requirement

Phase 2: Immersion

- Field visits to 10 establishments of various types, in line with the classification established during the scoping workshop. These visits included:
 - Observations of practices in restaurants and at waste disposal points
 - Semi-structured interviews with industry professionals
 - Online journey: a simulated journey of a restaurant owner seeking information on waste sorting, to identify barriers to accessing information.

Phase 3: Analysis

- Analysis and structuring of the results based on lessons learnt from the field
- Identification of recommendations and courses of action tailored to the catering sector
- Production of this report
- A debriefing meeting with partners

Sampling strategy



The initial scope deliberately excluded certain types of establishments: cafés, due to the low volume of bio-waste generated, and snack bars, whose site configurations are more varied and considered a lower priority within the scope of this short study.

In order to meet budgetary and time constraints, the study drew on the contacts of professionals already engaged by the CCI, whom we would like to thank for their commitment and for putting us in touch with others.

Although this choice was crucial to the feasibility of the assessment, it introduced a selection bias: the establishments visited were predominantly part of institutional networks, often already aware of the issue of bio-waste. Whilst the sample covered varying levels of commitment, it over-represented certain profiles relative to their actual proportion within the region.

Furthermore, the study was limited to the metropolitan area . It did not cover in detail the other areas of the Alpes-Maritimes department, nor, more broadly, the rest of the Sud region. The results and testimonials presented therefore primarily reflect primarily this local context.

Establishments visited as part of the study		
Type of establishment	Restaurant	7
	Hotel (0 to 3 stars)	2
Size of establishment (all types)	1 to 2 people	1
	3 to 5	1
	6 to 10	1
	11+	6
Management type	Independent "single-owner"	3
	Private owner "multi-restaurant/hotel"	4
	Chain/franchise	2
Special licence fee	establishment (all types) subject to the special levy	4
	Establishment not subject to the special levy	5
Compliance with sorting and recycling obligations	Establishment that does not comply	5
	Establishment that complies	4

Key findings

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1. Knowing and understanding the legal obligation

Key points

- The regulations are poorly understood and misinterpreted.
- There is considerable confusion between the obligation to sort waste and the implementation of recycling schemes
- The perceived lack of enforcement does not encourage the implementation of a sorting solution

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Regulations that are poorly understood and struggle to fulfil their purpose

Regulations that are still poorly understood and difficult to interpret

Regulations surrounding the sorting and recovery of bio-waste remain poorly understood by a large proportion of professionals in the sector. Few of the establishments surveyed seem to have a clear grasp of the precise details, apart from a few well-structured players or those affiliated with large groups, which often have dedicated departments (legal, CSR, etc.). For the self-employed, the AGEC Act often appears as a vague framework, sometimes perceived as distant, or even inapplicable to their situation.

“The obligations just keep piling up; it’s complicated. We rely heavily on word of mouth; we ask each other what the regulations are. Even the authorities sometimes don’t know when we ask them. Too much red tape kills the business”

Owner and manager, small restaurant

There is frequent confusion regarding the scope of the legal obligation between:

- **sorting**, which they see as a legitimate, feasible and even “normal” practice compared to other waste streams (glass, cardboard...), and
- **recycling**. The latter is often seen as the responsibility of local authorities, in the same way as for other waste. The idea that the business owner should have to organise, fund or negotiate this service themselves remains largely misunderstood, and is even perceived as unfair (see page 16).

Enforcement remains limited and poorly monitored, with little deterrent effect

Enforcing compliance with the obligation is not the responsibility of local authorities. In this context, the prospect of penalties remains highly theoretical. Formal notices and inspections are rare, and often made difficult by the need to observe practices at specific times (end of shift, closing time, etc.). Many professionals perceive the risk involved as low, or even non-existent.

“Yes, we may have obligations, but who comes to check? I wouldn’t call it an obligation if no one is monitoring it”

Head chef, hotel restaurant

Furthermore, in the absence of regular monitoring mechanisms or clearly identified responsible authorities, few establishments have been made aware of the requirements or supported in achieving compliance. Where efforts are made, they often take the form of one-off initiatives or collective campaigns led by certain trade unions or private partners private sector.

Ways to overcome this obstacle

- To clear up the confusion between sorting and recovery, and to clarify the "dual obligation" for professionals.
[See the focus on communication on p.29](#)
- Clarify whether penalties apply in the event of failure to comply with legal obligations, in which cases they apply and to whom they apply, so that professionals have a
of the rules and associated responsibilities.

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2. Decide to comply with the law

Key points

- A wide variety of establishment profiles leads to different obstacles.
- Perception of unfairness due to the lack of a clear public collection and recycling scheme.
- The benefits of sorting are poorly understood or considered to be minimal.

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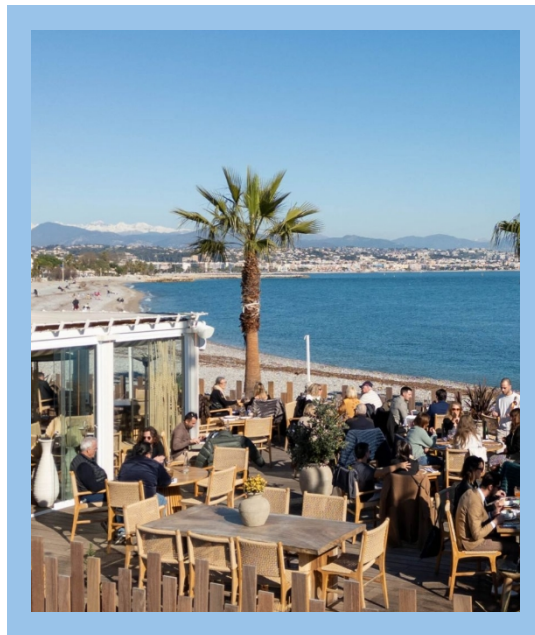
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A sector with diverse profiles that affects decision-making

The catering waste sector is characterised by considerable diversity, in terms of size, internal organisation, location and business model (independent operators, franchises, groups).

This structural diversity has a direct impact on practices and the ability to adopt solutions for the sorting and recovery of bio-waste.

For example, some establishments benefit from having a CSR manager or an executive assistant who can champion the issue, which facilitates the implementation of sorting schemes. In hotel groups or franchises, centralised guidelines, backed by technical and human resources, can accelerate the adoption of solutions. Conversely, in independent or family-run establishments, which are often small in scale, a lack of time, dedicated staff and space complicates any initiative. In certain tourist or outlying areas, commitment may vary depending on the locally perceived environmental awareness or the incentives offered by local authorities.



This diversity is particularly evident when it comes to financial constraints: the same cost does not represent the same burden depending on the size of the establishment, its cash flow situation or its economic stability. For some, it is a matter of adjustment; for others, a real barrier to action — and this is true even among some of the restaurateurs interviewed who said that it seemed ‘normal to pay for a service’.

“An establishment like mine here costs €200 or €250 a month [to set up a collection service]; for small, family-run restaurants, adding €2,500 a year is a struggle.”

Owner and manager, beach restaurant

“Personally, I thought it was really expensive. For a place the size of mine”

Owner and manager, small restaurant

Ways to overcome this obstacle

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To address the financial barrier:

- Continue and expand trials of incentive-based pricing genuinely linked to actual sorting, to ensure greater consistency between the effort made and the bill received.
- Create a subsidy scheme for the initial equipment or the implementation of a sorting/recovery solution, accessible following an assessment or support (by the CCI, ADEME, or a local authority).
- Draw inspiration from existing schemes for private individuals (ADEME grants, funding for the purchase of compost bins), adapting the amounts and conditions to the realities of the catering sector.
- Encourage pooling initiatives, for example by supporting housing estates or high streets wishing to set up collective schemes.

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Campaign by the Arcachon Nord Urban Community during the free distribution of bio-bins

A sector with a diverse range of roles that influences decision-making...

2.2

... which shares characteristics that influence their practices.

Despite this diversity, certain commonalities seem to emerge, but these relate more to shared obstacles than to unifying factors. Three major obstacles stand out:

Difficulty accessing information: many stakeholders have little presence on the channels currently used to raise their awareness or support them (professional meetings, webinars, mailing lists). And when they do participate, they are often faced with an overload of information – regulatory, technical, commercial – without a clear hierarchy. This abundance makes it difficult to identify the essential messages and ultimately discourages the processing of information. Institutional and regulatory information, in particular, struggles to reach them, or arrives in a fragmented and largely impractical form.

“It’s really hard to keep up to date with legal requirements; we’re often in touch with the Umih, which helps us a lot with these issues, but I must admit they send so many emails that sometimes we just don’t read them anymore...”

Owner and manager, small restaurant

Lack of time: most establishments are small businesses with few staff, operating at a frenetic pace, which severely limits their availability to take on new tasks.

“I work 17 hours a day; when do I have time to look into things, when do I have time to figure out how to do them?”

Owner and front-of-house staff, small restaurant

Strong hierarchical structure: decisions often rest with one or two key individuals (manager, chef), whose support is essential for any significant change.

“You have to be right behind [the waiters] all the time to make sure they don’t make mistakes.”

Owner and manager, beach restaurant

“To train them, I worked on the clearing-up team with them for almost a month to show them how to do it properly”

CSR Officer

Leverages to overcome this obstacle

- **Identify and target key figures in the hierarchy.** In a sector where time and resources are limited, no change in practice can take root without the explicit support of key individuals: managers, head chefs, and executive assistants.

These are the people we need to convince first and foremost, as they are often the decision-makers, but also the ones who influence others. Their influence may be operational (the head chef) or organisational (the manager), and one can pave the way for the other to take action.

- **Optimise information to minimise the effort required,** given a population that is already overwhelmed, any information or instructions must be extremely clear, visual and immediately actionable.
[See focus on communication, p.29](#)

Disseminate information via the channels that are actually used and focus on those already established in restaurant owners' practices:

- Word of mouth among peers (for example, via neighbourhood ambassadors or recognised local leaders)
- Emails from professional associations (UMIH, CCI, trade unions),
- traditional media: newspapers (print or online) and local television.

Social media, meetings or non-essential group events, such as those organised by the CCI, appear to be of little interest to these professionals, who prefer events that are part of their daily routine, such as trade union meetings or general meetings of retailers' associations. It is therefore more effective to build on these existing formats rather than create new ones.



Screenshot of the Nice-Matin website.
Several restaurateurs interviewed said they had discovered or become aware of the issue through the mainstream media.

A sense of injustice in the face of what is perceived as a lack of support from the local authority

Linked to this issue of understanding and perceiving regulatory obligations, **restaurant owners view the collection and recycling of bio-waste as a responsibility falling to local authorities**, in the same way as other waste streams. In their view, the taxes already paid (TEOM, special levy, charges via the property manager) should guarantee a collection service tailored to their needs.

Restaurateurs criticise the public authorities for imposing obligations on them without providing sufficient resources to meet them. This perception fuels a sense of injustice among some and can lead to a form of disengagement from the issue.

“What we need is for the council to do something about it.”
Owner and manager, city centre restaurant

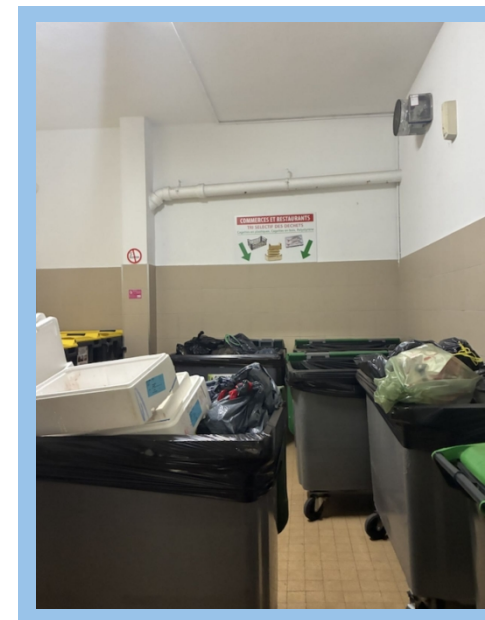
“I asked the council to provide us with a compost bin so we could put our waste in it, but they won’t”
Owner and manager, small restaurant

These feelings of incomprehension and weariness seem to be exacerbated by the introduction of the **special levy (see next page)**, which is seen as an unjustified burden in the absence of a local authority solution to sort all waste streams, including bio-waste — and thus reduce the amount of the levy applied to them.

“Even if we have to pay a small fee, a communal bin per street would actually be good because it’s easy to take the bin ([the bio-bin]) and go and put it out”

Owner and manager, small restaurant

This confusion is even more pronounced among restaurant owners located in block of flats. Many say they do not understand why they pay both service charges to the property manager for waste management, the household waste collection tax (TEOM), and sometimes a special fee for businesses, without knowing precisely who pays what, for which service, or how this would change with the introduction of organic waste sorting.



A refuse room used by restaurant owners and a block of flats, managed by a of co-owners

Focus on taxes

In discussions with restaurant owners, there is often confusion regarding the various existing taxes, the respective responsibilities of local authorities and their own obligations. This confusion persists despite the detailed information contained in the agreements they sign with the local authority. Given the significant mental workload associated with the day-to-day running of their businesses, many retain only part of the information received, which fuels misunderstandings about what they are paying for, the services actually covered, and what falls under their direct responsibility.

Many restaurant owners believe that local authorities should be responsible for the collection of bio-waste, even though this falls neither within their remit nor is it a legal obligation. This perception is often explained by a spontaneous comparison with the collection of other waste streams (household waste, packaging, glass, paper), for which the local authority does indeed play an active role.

TEOM (Household Waste Collection Tax):

- This tax applies to all properties subject to council tax and funds the collection of household waste (residual waste produced by households and certain businesses).
- **The amount is calculated based on the property's rental value and does not depend on the actual volume of waste produced.**

Special Charge:

- This applies only to businesses or establishments producing a significant volume of waste equivalent to household waste, generally exceeding a locally set threshold (for example: 1,100, 660 or 2,500 litres per week depending on the area).
- This charge is calculated based on the volumes and collection frequencies declared in an agreement signed between the local authority and the business.
- It applies in addition to or in place of the TEOM, but the amount of the TEOM is often deducted when calculating the special charge.
- Currently, the special charge does not apply to the whole department or the whole region.

Taxes and bio-waste:

- In principle, the special levy and the TEOM apply only to residual waste collected via the traditional household waste collection system, not to bio-waste sorted at source, as the aim is to encourage its sorting and recovery.
- Large-scale commercial producers of bio-waste generally need to arrange their own collection with a private contractor and are not subject to the special levy or the TEOM for this part of their waste stream (these volumes are not included in the basis for calculating the levy or tax; only unsorted waste is).
- This encourages businesses to sort organic waste separately to avoid incurring additional costs through the special levy or the TEOM.
- Biowaste is not included in the special levy, as the local authority does not collect this waste stream.

Ways to address this obstacle

- **Ensure 'operational transparency'.** Ensuring transparency and justifying waste treatment charges helps counter the sense of injustice (for example, the perception of the special levy as a payment with no visible benefit). It is important to clearly explain exactly what the special levy covers – namely the collection and treatment of certain waste streams – and what it does not cover, such as bio-waste, which falls under other schemes or remains the responsibility of producers. Providing concrete details of how the money collected is used (organising collection rounds, processing the waste collected, technical investments) helps to demonstrate that there is indeed a service behind this charge and to justify its cost, whilst clarifying the limits of that service.
- **Develop formal partnerships (DSP, PPP) to organise this collective provision.**



©Bercy. Breakdown by category or function of expenditure per €1,000 of tax revenue in 2023, in France (Source: Bercy).

Meet the expectations of restaurant owners by developing a solution supported by the local authority. *It should be noted that the development of such a solution is not a regulatory requirement. Furthermore, it naturally involves technical, economic and political issues specific to each region, considerations that go beyond the scope of this study. We are merely setting out the points raised by the restaurateurs surveyed regarding the implementation of such a solution, for the benefit of local authorities.*

- **Collection times tailored to opening hours:** organise collections after service, when volumes are higher and this does not disrupt business.
- **Local drop-off points:** provide drop-off points that are easily accessible on foot, ideally on the same street.
- **Secure equipment:** use closed, pest-resistant containers to ensure hygiene and cleanliness.
- **Shared solutions:** encourage the sharing of equipment or spaces between neighbouring establishments to reduce costs.

The case of Fontainebleau

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Restaurateurs in Fontainebleau, like all producers of bio-waste, have been required to sort their food waste at source since 1 January 2024. The town, in partnership with the SMICTOM of the Fontainebleau region and the Compost & Nous association, has put in place a tailored scheme that clearly distinguishes between households and businesses.

How do restaurant owners manage their bio-waste?

- Voluntary drop-off points: Fontainebleau has installed 24 voluntary drop-off points across the town. These allow businesses, including restaurants, to bring their bio-waste for disposal.
- Collection and recycling: the Compost & Nous association handles the collection, often using sustainable transport (such as cargo bikes), and the recycling of bio-waste through local composting, which helps to nourish the town's green spaces

Contact: collecte@smictom-fontainebleau.fr and compost.et.nous@gmail.com

- On-site composting: certain establishments with sufficient space can use on-site composting, at the foot of the building or in dedicated areas, in conjunction with the schemes run by Compost & Nous and SMICTOM.

Who are the key players involved?

- SMICTOM for the Fontainebleau region: an inter-municipal authority responsible for the collection, logistical organisation and management of the waste sector within the area, including the coordination of the bio-waste sector.
- Compost & Nous: an organisation that manages the collection of bio-waste, monitors the process, advises businesses, and recycles waste through composting.
- The City of Fontainebleau: coordinates waste policy, facilitates networking, raises awareness and provides administrative support to businesses.

Role of the local authority and financial support

The town and SMICTOM provide self-service collection points and composting equipment, and organise the logistics. Catering businesses must register and may contribute to the cost of the service:

- Voluntary drop-off: included in the household waste charge (REOM/TEOM), with a single invoice issued by SMICTOM based on the premises and waste production.
- Specific services (dedicated collection, personalised support, shared compost bins): financial contribution or specific contract requested by Compost & Nous depending on volume and service.
- The local authority organises and funds the overall scheme, but operational costs (additional bins, specific monitoring) may be partially or fully borne by businesses depending on the complexity of the service.

Uneven awareness of the benefits of sorting



Whilst some committed establishments clearly link the sorting of bio-waste to tangible benefits, such as:

- reducing waste,
- improved image,
- access to environmental or tourism labels

others do not yet perceive the positive benefits of this practice. For the latter, sorting is not a priority, often taking a back seat to other constraints deemed more urgent. The link between this obligation and its potential economic (reduction in volumes and charges), environmental, or branding effects remains little known, poorly documented or deemed irrelevant in their context.

These differing perceptions of the consequences of (not) sorting represent:

- For some, a major obstacle to decision-making and taking action
- For others, a real driving force for complying with the obligation

“It also encourages you to maximise revenue and minimise waste. So there’s a benefit there too; even though it’s an expense, there’s still a financial incentive – in short, there’s a financial incentive behind the idea that there are ways to optimise what we do...”

“...waste is a double loss of money because it’s a loss of money in that we pay the contractor to collect and sort the waste, and it’s an immediate loss because if we waste food, that’s money we’ve spent too, so we lose money twice over with waste”

CSR representative, luxury hotel

“A great initiative. It’s both environmentally friendly and practical – things that are moving in the right direction”

Owner and manager, beach restaurant

“As a head chef, I have ratios to stick to. A ratio refers to the use of raw ingredients in relation to production costs and retail costs. So I benefit at every level”

Head chef, beach restaurant

“I’m not going to overload the dishwashers with work; they’re not going to be doing anything selective. They’re already swamped with work, so I’m not going to tell them, ‘You’re going to sort the plates.’”

Head chef at a beach restaurant “The

customers don’t mention it – they couldn’t care less”

Owner of a small restaurant

Leverages to overcome this obstacle

Given that awareness is still uneven, it is essential to activate levers that make sorting desirable, visible and valued, not only from an environmental perspective, but also as an asset for reputation and competitiveness for establishments.

- **Presenting waste sorting as a sign of reliability and competitiveness**

Today, sorting waste means being among the “top performers” – a position that carries institutional weight, but also offers a reputational advantage in a sector where image matters (labels, customers, partners).

- **Making efforts visible in the public sphere**

Simple, clear displays in shop windows (signage, stickers) that highlight the company’s commitment without overburdening staff.

- **Be part of a positive trend** Present recycling not as a constraint, but as an expected development, in keeping with the times, which will gradually become the norm.
- **Use the right arguments depending on who you’re talking to**
Talk about waste rather than rubbish; highlight savings and cost optimisation (ratios, losses) for managers and supervisors.

These levers could be embodied in targeted communications, disseminated at the right time and in the right place, depending on profiles and contexts.

See focus on communication on p.29



Quality labels displayed in the entrance to a hotel restaurant

3. Choosing the right solution

Key takeaway

- The real challenge is identifying a recovery solution.
- Private service providers can arouse mistrust and doubts.
- There is a need for clear tools, assessments and reliable comparisons.

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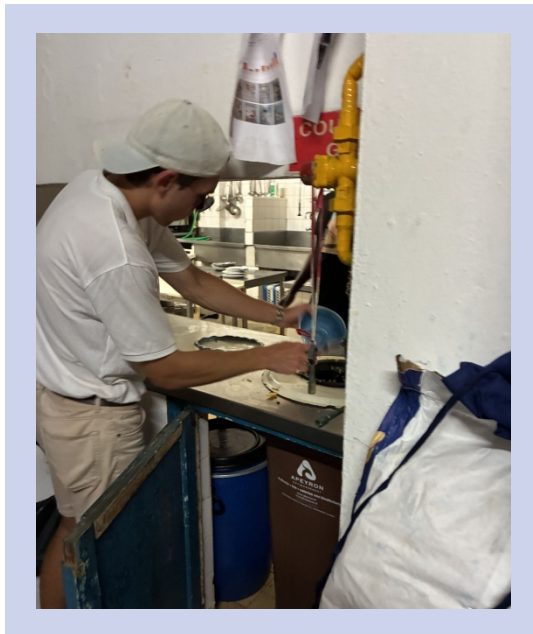
A challenge less related to sorting than to identifying a recovery solution

Confirming the hypothesis put forward during the scoping phase, field observations indicate that the main difficulty — across all types of establishments — does not lie in the act of sorting itself: sorting is not an unfamiliar task for professionals; many of them already sort other waste streams (glass, cardboard, used oil) or have implemented similar practices in the past.

The difficulties appear to lie in the initial decision-making stage: identifying a suitable solution for the recovery of bio-waste and embedding it within the establishment's operations. For some of the restaurant owners interviewed, this stems from a lack of awareness of the quantities of bio-waste produced, linked to a narrow view (peelings or plate leftovers only), doubts about what is included, and a difficulty in accurately estimating the volumes at the establishment level.

“Yes, I sort and recycle [...] everything that comes from the kitchen, [...] plate leftovers go in the household waste”

Manager, small restaurant



More broadly, professionals in the sector are accustomed to adapting their working methods in the kitchen or dining room when deemed necessary (for example, to meet hygiene, safety or accessibility standards).

The **'forward flow'** system – a well-known principle in the kitchen that requires a smooth and logical flow of ingredients to prevent cross-contamination – illustrates their ability to embrace structural changes when the framework is clear and deemed legitimate.

The difficulty therefore seems **to lie more in the decision** to implement changes than in the actual introduction of new procedures in the dining room and kitchen.

Depending on the establishment, this decision-making process affects certain key figures: the owner, the manager and the head chef. In all cases, due to the **strong hierarchical structure** that characterises this sector, its effective implementation relies on their commitment to act as a driving force and establish new, sustainable habits.

Ways to address this issue

Provide diagnostic tools to help identify the right solution for each establishment. This type of initiative could be carried out by the CCI, the local authority or a service provider. This potential solution, which is already being explored as part of the CEFoodcycle project, could take several forms, depending on the resources available:

- Online self-assessment: lower cost, but, on its own, unlikely to be proactively identified and used by restaurant owners
 - Personalised in-person support: high cost, but enables a precise response to restaurateurs' difficulties and increases their motivation to take action (creating a sense of 'reciprocity' in response to the efforts of the support provider and the stakeholder mobilising them)
- Several associations or companies offer support to restaurant owners in implementing a bio-waste recovery solution, including a personalised assessment:
EcoTable, Veolia, Réseau Compost Citoyen, Upcycle.

The Nice-Côte d'Azur CCI already offers free ecological maturity assessments and a bespoke action plan.

However, demand remains low, suggesting that these schemes are still not widely known among restaurant owners. The problem is therefore not just about providing tools, but also **about making them more accessible and raising awareness of them.**



CCI NICE CÔTE D'AZUR

ACTUALITÉ

Transition écologique : passez le cap avec votre CCI !

Publié le 05 mai 2022

Vous êtes commerçant, restaurateur ou indépendant et souhaitez engager ou accélérer votre transition écologique ? Votre CCI vous accompagne dans votre démarche.

3.2

Solutions offered by private providers can be a source of mistrust

Faced with the wide range of waste management options (composting, anaerobic digestion, collection), restaurant owners don't know where to start, or how to compare the different schemes or service providers. Even when they receive a proposal directly, they don't have the time to look into it properly. As one restaurant owner puts it:

"A sales representative came to see me, but she turned up at a busy time... I still have her business card, but I've never had time to look at it."

Owner and manager, small restaurant

Added to this is a strong mistrust regarding the actual effectiveness of the collection system. Some restaurant owners believe that bio-waste, even when sorted, will subsequently be mixed back together during transport or storage, an idea fuelled by what they observe of municipal waste processing. Others doubt the existence of genuine recovery channels and fear that bio-waste

will ultimately be incinerated despite stated intentions.

This perception is reinforced by a sometimes negative image of service providers, fuelled not only by word of , but also by certain media content, such as a documentary mentioned several times during the interviews.

"We could do it, but we know that afterwards everything will end up mixed together in the bins"

Owner and manager, restaurant in Old Nice

"If it's sorted but then ends up being incinerated because there are no proper recycling channels, what's the point?"

Owner and manager, small restaurant



Cash Investigation: Waste, the Great Illusion (France 2, 2018), still available on YouTube.

Leverages to address this obstacle

- To provide decision-makers (owners, managers, business leaders) with practical, easy-to-understand resources to help them make informed choices and compare options. For example, this could take the form of an overview of existing local solutions (collection schemes, models, pricing, and feedback).

These resources could come from a source perceived as legitimate and reliable, such as the CCI or the UMIH today.

“The CCI provided us with a list of service providers in the region; this gave us a good starting point for our research.”

CSR representative, luxury hotel

See focus on communication, p.29

- Direct professionals towards recognised, proven service providers.



2015-2016

PRESTATAIRES DE COLLECTE & VALORISATION DES BIODECHETS

pour établissements de santé et médico-sociaux

ANNUAIRE

MIDI-PYRÉNÉES

LES PRESTATAIRES de collecte et de valorisation

	Compostage	Méthanisation	Collecte et Transport	Valeur d'offre*	Agrement SNUCP	Page
APAG ENVIRONNEMENT						17
BIONERVAL						9
BRALEY ROUERGUE						8
CLER VERTS						10
COVALREC						12
DECHETS SERVICES						8
EASY TRI						10
SEDE ENVIRONNEMENT						12
SITA						7
SYDED						14
TERRALYS						7
VEOLIA PROPRIETE						7

*Valeur d'offre: pas de volume minimum de collecte / Non prise ou volume accepté.

2015 : Les seuls prestataires de catégorie 3, tels que le fait et un profitabilité élevée, les CCI et les entreprises sociales ont obtenu toutes les autorisations de collecte et de tri de déchets. Elles toutes avec une installation spécifique d'un agrément sanitaire délivré par le DSDAPP (Direction Départementale de la Santé Publique et de la Protection des Populations).

LES SOLUTIONS DE PRE-TRAITEMENT un intérêt logistique / page 16

Séchage-Diacyclisation	Ces solutions ne sont qu'un pré-traitement des biodéchets. Le produit sortant n'est pas un compost. Il garde le statut de déchets et ne peut pas être épuré directement.
Eco-aligneur	
Broyeur-pulvérisateur	
Bio tank	

LES PRESTATAIRES

12- Aveyron

RALEY ROUERGUE

Irreille Brunet
tél. : 06 28 05 72 17
prunet-braley@hotmail.fr
Zones ZA Les Cabades
2340 Rocelle
tél. : 05 65 48 45 24
tél. : www.bralay.france.com

Modes de traitement	Compostage
Collecte et transport	X
Prix de collecte	Adaptée
Valeur d'offre	Non
Zones programmées	Bucles et Nord Aveyron
Développement	Non
Capacité de collecte	- Bennes de 4 à 20 m ³ - Containers 200/250 litres
Déclaration CPE	X
Agrement SNUCP	Non

ECHETS SERVICES

Irène Cazelles
tél. : 06 32 57 18 63
irone.cazelles@groupepepa.fr
Z.A. La Grèbe Sauvignac
2200 Villeneuve de Rouergue
tél. : 05 65 81 16 49
tél. : www.esca.fr

Modes de traitement	Compostage
Collecte et transport	X
Prix de collecte	Adaptée
Valeur d'offre	Non
Zones programmées	Villeneuve et 50 km aux alentours
Développement	Non
Capacité de collecte	- Bacs à roulettes avec 100 litres - Containers 200/250 litres - Cabarets 1/50 litres
Déclaration CPE	X
Agrement SNUCP	Non

TERRALYS

Le Bayle
tél. : 05 62 00 78 90
le.bayle@terralys.fr
Julien
3360 Rouffignac sur Garonne
tél. : 05 62 00 78 90
tél. : www.terralys.fr

Modes de traitement	Compostage et méthanisation
Collecte et transport	Agrément CCI (Préfecture de Tarn)
Prix de collecte	Flexibles
Valeur d'offre	Non
Zones programmées	09 12 31 10 60 82 / 92 65
Développement	X
Capacité de collecte	- Bennes 10 m ³ - Bennes 200 litres - 50 volumes
Déclaration CPE	X
Agrement SNUCP	X

Regional directory of bio-waste collection and recovery service providers, published by ADEME, The Sustainable Health Development Committee and REQUAMIP in 2015. It provides a regional overview of service providers, a practical and reliable tool for directing professionals towards recognised collectors and recovery operators, with a comparison of methods and approvals.

Ways to overcome this obstacle

- **Service providers have a key role to play in building trust among professionals.** It is their responsibility not only to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the service (adherence to timetables, suitable equipment, responsiveness), but also to **increase transparency regarding what happens to the sorted waste.** Regular feedback, statistical reports, sorting quality indicators and visual evidence of recycling help reassure professionals of the value of their commitment and allow the service to be adjusted where necessary.

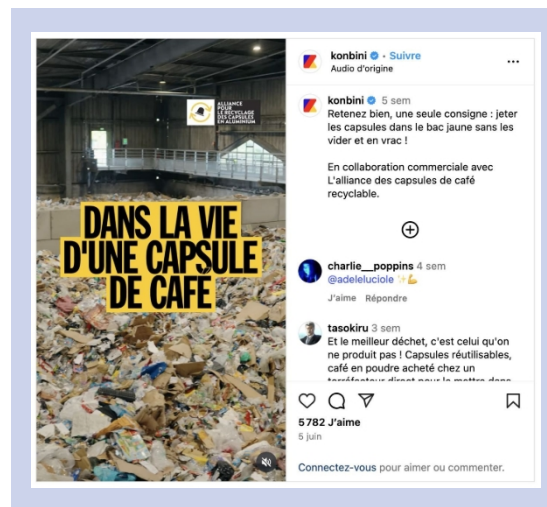
This can also involve a more hands-on approach:

highlighting the people and practices that their actions actually support. Explaining in very concrete terms that “this sorting enables Mr X, a local farmer, to enrich his soil”. Showing what this feeds at the end of the chain, putting a face to the recycled waste and demonstrating its end uses, makes the effort tangible and motivating.

- **The detailed monthly or quarterly reports provided by service providers – which are highly valued by restaurant owners who use this type of service –** could also be better utilised and shared. Service providers would benefit from relying more heavily on this concrete evidence, not only as a sales pitch, but as a means of building trust and commitment among those who sort waste on a daily basis.



For example, to enhance transparency and bring the sector to life, ARCA has collaborated with Konbini to create an immersive video tracing, step the journey of a used capsule through to its recovery. By clearly showing the stakeholders involved, the actions taken and the end uses, this visual aid leverages evidence and embodiment, making the sorting chain tangible and credible in the eyes of professionals.



4. Implementing sorting procedures and ensuring collection

Key takeaway

- Limited storage space and logistical constraints are holding things back.
- Collection times are poorly suited to people's schedules.
- Technical and organisational solutions tailored to the realities on the ground (schedules, storage)

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Concerns about storage can hinder action

The lack of space to store waste (in the kitchen or in a dedicated area, cold room, or refuse room) once bins are full is a major obstacle. This is a particularly significant issue in Old Nice or the Carré d'Or, where space is scarce and expensive.

In environments with limited space, the addition of a new waste stream to sort can be discouraging. Added to this are **problems with managing storage space for establishments in block of flats**: small restaurant owners often have to share waste storage areas with the building's residents or deposit their waste at communal collection points, which complicates day-to-day logistics: they sometimes have to go through the property management companies to obtain permission to store bins for bio-waste, which can add a layer of administrative complexity and hinder the implementation of simple and effective solutions.

Insufficient collection frequency Unlike large establishments with dedicated storage areas (sometimes refrigerated), small businesses do not have this flexibility.

Assuming a collection scheme were to be introduced, several restaurant owners express reluctance to leave their food waste bins on the street, as is already the case for cardboard or household waste. They fear that passers-by might throw non-compliant waste into them, which could lead to collection refusals or fines. This concern is fuelled by what they already observe on a daily basis: torn-open bags, bins being misused, and a lack of supervision in public spaces in the evenings.

“The council imposes a lot of rules on us; the bin must be closed [otherwise] the police come round and fine us – it’s a hassle.”

Head chef, beach restaurant



Added to this is the fear of nuisance if bins are kept indoors: odours, lack of space, and hygiene constraints in kitchens that are often very cramped.

Some also highlight the incompatibility with collection times, which are sometimes ill-suited to their business.

“[...] at some point there’s a smell... We take the bins out every day, don’t we.”

Manager, small restaurant

How can we make use of these tools?

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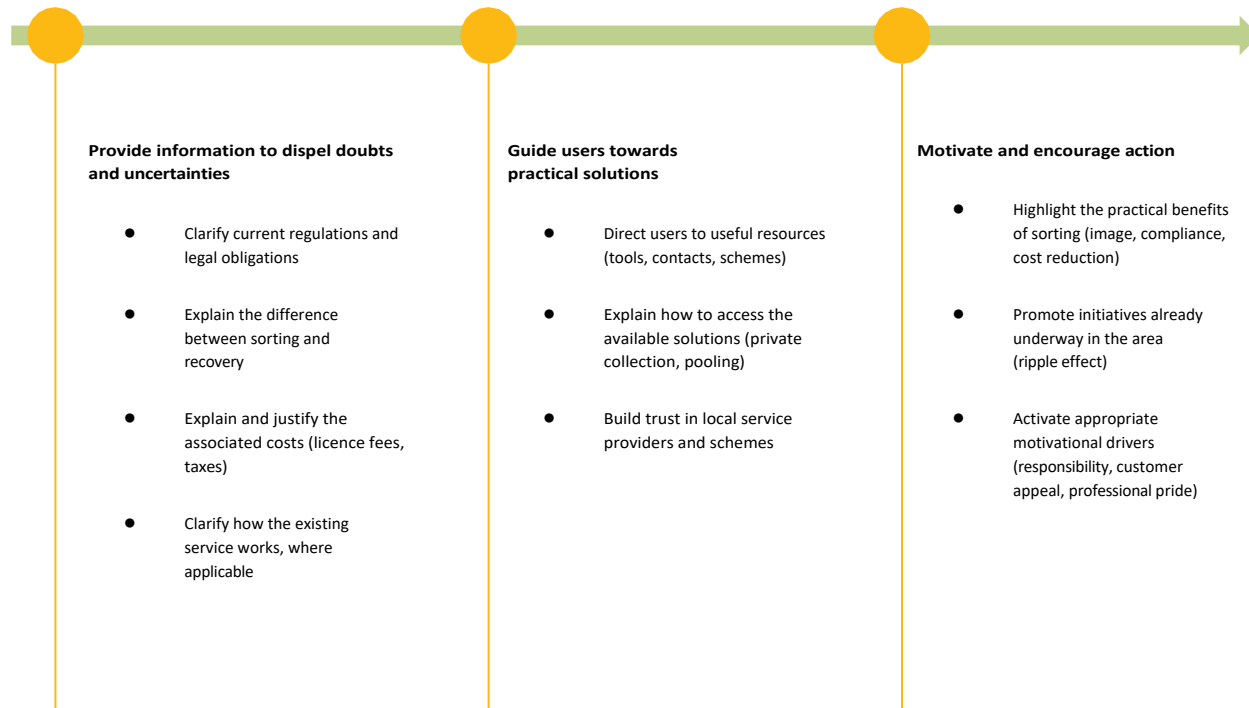
CEFoodCycle

An information 'journey' to overcome these various barriers

The levers discussed throughout the report address several challenges: providing information on the obligation; offering support to identify suitable solutions; and encouraging action.

To achieve this, the proposed levers could be incorporated into an awareness-raising 'journey', using impactful communications across channels likely to be consulted by professionals (see next page).

This 'journey' approach, rather than a single communication, helps to limit the cognitive load on recipients, focus each communication on a key message, sequence the messages to reflect the decision-making process of professionals (from awareness of the regulations to action) and increase the chances of the information being understood and retained.



Ideas for bringing the journey to life

Below are some initial illustrative examples.

Official letter sent to the restaurant

A printed letter, personalised with the name of the establishment and/or owner, and signed by an official body such as the local council or metropolitan authority, reinforces credibility and a sense of urgency. It contains a clear reminder of the law and penalties (social standards, injunction), with a simple call to action. It directs recipients to resources without overwhelming them with information, thereby reducing cognitive load.

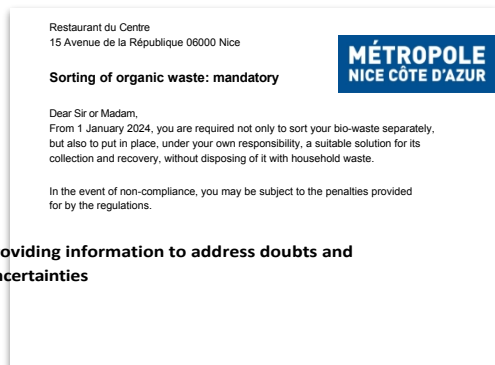
Message from the CCI / UMIH as allies

Proactive communication from organisations perceived as approachable and reliable, offering practical advice. For example, in the form of leaflets sent to restaurant owners. Provision of simple resources and directories, few steps to take, human contact offered. Boosts motivation by showing that others like me are already doing it.

Message from CCI / UMIH as allies

Reminders and motivational points in newsletters. Include regular reminders in professional mailings. Highlight the benefits (financial, image) and testimonials from other restaurant owners. Encourages repetition of the message and helps establish the norm.

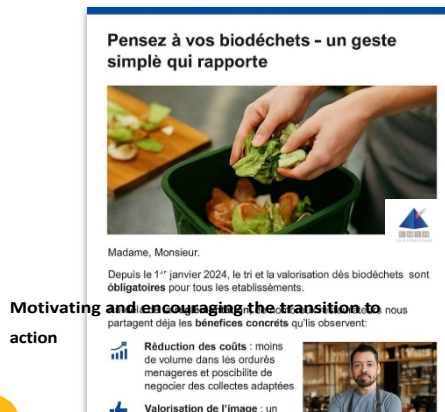
Paper letter



Flyers



Emails



Very brief, visual and practical communication


- **Keep it short, visual and practical**
Professionals have little time and limited mental bandwidth. Avoid complex or dense messages. Get straight to the point, using clear visuals and simple language.
- **Keep it as simple as possible**
Limit the amount of information per message. One objective per medium. Use easy-to-digest formats (checklists, illustrations, pictograms).
- **Provide a clear call to action**
Don't just provide information; every message should lead to a concrete action: ordering a compost bin, booking an appointment, or filling in a short form. The message must state "what to do", "when", and "how".
- **Provide a human point of contact**
A phone number, email address or accessible helpline helps to address specific concerns (logistics, tax, service providers, etc.). Direct communication boosts credibility.

Personalisation

Influential messenger

Availability of personalised support highlighted

*La Ville de Roubaix s'engage sur le logement.
Contactez-nous dès maintenant pour que nous vous aidions
avec la gestion de votre logement vacant.*



Bonjour Monsieur,
D'après nos informations, vous êtes propriétaire d'un logement vacant depuis 2014 situé au [redacted]

La commune de Roubaix s'engage pour donner toute sa valeur à votre bien immobilier et protéger votre quartier des risques de dégradations, incendies ou squats liés à la vacance.

Faites-nous savoir au plus vite si votre logement est toujours vacant en :

- ☎ Nous appelant au 03 59 63 52 46 (du mercredi au vendredi de 9h à 11h30 et de 14h à 16h30 ainsi que le samedi de 9h à 12h)

Nous retournant le formulaire joint :

- ✉ par email à : logementvacant@ville-roubaix.fr
- ✉ par courrier à l'adresse : MAIRIE DE ROUBAIX
Service logements vacants
17 Grand Place CS 70737
59066 ROUBAIX Cedex 1

Si votre logement est toujours vacant, nous sommes là pour vous aider à :

1. Identifier les possibilités d'accompagnement en fonction de l'état de votre logement, de vos objectifs et de votre situation
2. Accéder aux aides et garanties disponibles, et vous accompagner dans vos démarches de rénovation, mise en location ou mise en vente.

Cet accompagnement est bien sûr gratuit et est un service offert à tous par la commune.

Merci d'avance pour votre réponse, Monsieur.

Clear call to action

Important information stands out visually

Letter, designed according to behavioural principles, sent by the city of Roubaix to encourage landlords to let their vacant properties.
Extract from the guide "Reaching out to owners of vacant properties – A practical guide for local authorities" – DITP and BIT, 2021.

A very short, visual and concrete message



→ **Building trusted relationships to reinforce the message's impact**

Two key factors emerge from feedback from the field:

- ◆ Peer support is reassuring: testimonials from local restaurant owners or hoteliers lend credibility to the message. Showing that 'others like me' have done it helps to dispel doubts.
- ◆ The sender matters: many professionals say they pay more attention to a message if it comes from an entity perceived as legitimate: town hall, tax authority. The simple fact that a message comes from a clearly identified sender or uses a meaningful channel is often enough to attract attention: for example, a letter bearing the tax office logo is far more likely to be opened than an envelope perceived as advertising or commercial.

→ **Choosing the right time to communicate**

Target times when the organisation is undergoing change: refurbishment, accreditation, change of service provider, introduction of new regulations. Avoid peak periods (high tourist season).

→ **Adapt to the establishment's profile**

The constraints are not the same for a small snack bar in the town centre as for a 4-star hotel. Segment your messages and recognise the realities of each situation.

Recommendations by stakeholder



CCI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Facilitate access to existing resources, in particular by simplifying the online process for finding them (reducing the number of clicks, centralising useful links, and highlighting them in spaces or media already consulted by professionals).● Disseminate clear and actionable information on the law and available solutions (emails, webinars, short videos) by capitalising on the channels usually consulted by restaurant owners● Continue to offer personalised assessments and support (online self-assessment or on-site support) to help choose the right solution
Local authorities (Metropolitan Area, EPCI, local councils)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide operational transparency on what is being done and the cost of services (to avoid a sense of unfairness)● Set up shared facilities (e.g. communal bins on each street, shared compost bins)● Provide a clear timetable and framework for penalties and inspections once the solutions have been implemented● Work in partnership with private or voluntary sector providers via public service contracts or public-private partnerships to organise the service● Set up or support suitable collection solutions (local drop-off points, collection outside peak times)
Trade association	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Pass on regulatory information and best practices to members (emails, meetings)● Negotiate collective solutions or group purchasing to reduce costs● Act as a spokesperson to local authorities to highlight obstacles and drive initiatives forward● Incorporate economic arguments (cost savings, image, labels) into awareness-raising efforts
Restaurateurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Train key staff (chefs, managers, dishwashers) and adapt sorting routines in the kitchen and dining room● Highlight their commitment to customers (posters, labels such as the Green Key) to use this as a tool for enhancing their image
Waste collection and recycling service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reassure restaurant owners by increasing transparency regarding the fate of sorted waste, using concrete evidence (statistical reports, quality indicators, photos or videos of the processing, testimonials from local stakeholders) to make the waste management process tangible and credible.● Provide a reliable and transparent service (collections at convenient times, secure bins, regular reporting)● Educate and support restaurant owners in implementing waste sorting (signage, short training sessions, follow-up)● Offer flexible solutions (container exchange, on-site machines) to accommodate space and time constraints.● Participate in local trials with the CCI and local authorities to improve the service

Conclusion

Adopting new practices, however commendable, remains a complex task when the environment does not facilitate their implementation. Locally, the perception that there is a lack of a clear, attractive and structured system for the collection and recovery of bio-waste, combined with land constraints and a shortage of space to store containers, limits restaurateurs' ability to commit fully.

This study constitutes an initial targeted observation. To take this further, it would be appropriate to conduct a broader assessment that is more representative of the true diversity of the catering sector in urban areas. The sector is not limited to large establishments, over-represented in this study: it also includes many smaller establishments, 87% of which have fewer than ten employees.

These are likely to face constraints of a different nature. A large-scale quantitative survey would provide robust data to inform future actions and guide future support measures.



Finally, it is essential to continue experimenting in the field. In particular, we offer initial ideas for overcoming the identified obstacles, through a targeted communication strategy, and examples of how this could be implemented.

These experiments must not only verify whether a solution “works”, but also offer restaurant owners high-quality experiences that serve as credible and inspiring demonstrations.

By ensuring the quality of the experience offered, we build trust and encourage people to get on board. It is at this price that changes in practice, already visible among certain pioneers, will gradually take root on a larger scale.



This report was drafted as part of the European CEFoodCycle project, carried out between April and June 2025.

Our sincere thanks to the various participants:

To the restaurant and hotel owners for their hospitality and willingness to help,
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