T 2.A1 Waste audit

Summary: Waste audit aims to determine the amount and the composition of the waste produced. Such information will serve in particular to identify potential for waste reduction/minimization, treatment and recovery options and waste management optimization (segregation, collection and disposal).
Waste audit usually takes place over a week in a defined area.

Description

A waste audit consists in collecting waste on a daily basis, over a week, and each day: weigh the waste, characterize the waste (i.e. separate the collected waste in different waste fractions, weigh each fraction separately), and report the gathered information on a document. At the end of the week, an average of waste production per day can be obtained. It is advised to repeat such audit at different times of the year to capture seasonal variations.

Waste audit should (i) provide consistent information/data, (ii) be simple, convenient and repeatable and (iii) the information/data must be collected and reported in a manner that permits an effective evaluation of waste reduction opportunities and management optimization.

Key steps are described in the table below.

Steps
Step 1. Adapt waste audit process to school settings and priorities (see Guide 2.A1)
Step 2. Define time and location of waste audit
Step 3. Prepare the team and the logistics (waste audit team and period, schedule and location of the measurements) (2 days)
Step 4. Get the necessary equipment (1-2 days)
Step 5. Train people who will conduct the waste audit (1 day)
Step 6. Conduct the waste audit (6-8 days)
Step 7. Complete the data and analyze the results (3 days)

Resources

Guide 2.A1 Waste audit at school – Procedure

Tool 2.A1.1 Recording sheet for waste audit

Tool 2.A1.2 Recording sheets for waste composition analysis

A. Kitchen/canteen

B. Other

Additional resources:

- *UN-Habitat, 2021. Waste Wise Cities Tool (Step 2)*
- *Wasteaid, 2017. Making waste work: A toolkit – How to measure your waste*
- *MOOC module – Conducting a Waste Generation and Characterization Study (Eawag/Sandec)*