

THE IMPORTANCE OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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ABSTRACT

According to UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2021, around 931 million tons of food waste was generated in 2019 and nearly 570 million tons of this waste occurs at the household level. On the other hand, more than 800 million people suffer from hunger worldwide. Additionally, 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food that is not consumed. In general, food waste generation has substantial negative impacts: environmentally, socially and economically. The circular economy is an economic model that aims to avoid waste and to preserve the value of resources (raw materials, energy and water) for as long as possible. The main purpose of this paper is to analyze and present interlinkages between food waste management, circular economy and SDGs, considering that food waste management is generally treated as an environmental challenge, but it has also notable gains for the economic and social objectives of sustainable development. The first part of the presented research examines the role of food waste management in the context of a circular economy transition. The second part of this research presents an analysis of each of the SDGs in the context of circular economy and food waste management. The results obtained showed that the strongest relationships and synergies between circular economy practices, food waste management and SDG targets lie within SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), which have high scores both for direct and for indirect contributions.

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