

Consortium for a Coherent European Landfill Management Strategy



Added value of COCOON: an opinion from Fons

Before I got involved in working on COCOON, my interest in landfills was small. In common landfills are well known as static places where in the past waste was dumped, covered with a sealing or a low ground. An inheritance from the past: bygones be bygones and forget it. Places where you don't want to come and don't take care about. Until I realized that there are over 500.000 of them in Europe (and about 6.000 in The Netherlands). Places you even can't ignore, also because most of them are in the vicinity of high densely areas. And I realized that these landfills in spite of threats can be seen as opportunities, because these are also areas with a potential stock of resources. In a transition to a circular economy a real challenge!

Working with other EU-member states on policies for enhanced sustainable landfill management is sharing knowledge and experiences, empathizing and be aware that the waste management policy in your country or region is different to others. Do not condemn, but try to move in the situation of others and share the knowledge on how your country or region reduced the waste to landfills last decades. And realize that it also took you a long run to come where you are now. So don't let others reinvent the wheel. Cooperate as partner member states to transform the static approach on managing the European landfills according to the current Directive 1999/31/EC towards a dynamic landfill management and mining strategy for Europe's 500.000+ landfills. For me COCOON is substantially part of that transformation.

As far COCOON gave me some insights in how landfill management in other EU-member states is organized. For example Flanders and Brandenburg (project partners in the COCOON project) developed programs how to determine the 'value' of the waste that is landfilled. Andalusia is –as The Netherlands- working on innovations to reduce the risks and costs for aftercare of landfills in a way that the landfills and their surrounding area in future can be (re)developed and give a new value for the people living in the vicinity, for example creating future values by generating energy (photovoltaic cells).

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