

**Interreg
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CORE

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GP 'Successful Marketing of compost and digestate in Flanders'



Description

- Problem addressed
- Context where the practice was introduced
- Objective

Implementation

- Timescale
- Resources needed
- Actors involved

Evidence of success

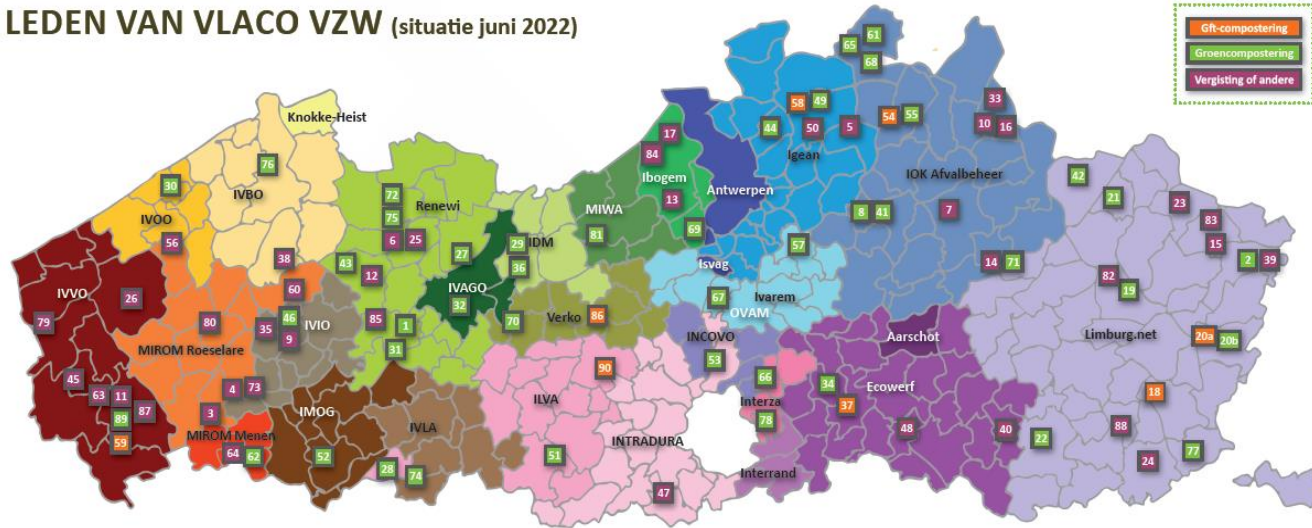
- Results achieved
- Users/ beneficiaries

Lessons learnt

- Positive
- Negative
- Challenge

Introduction

LEDEN VAN VLACO VZW (situatie juni 2022)



- **Vlaco active since 1992 as membership organization**
 - Association of municipalities and OVAM
 - 54 Composting plants (VFG/kitchen-waste and green waste)
 - 44 Anaerobic digestion plants + biothermal drying plants

‘getting more out of the biocycle’

Description

- Problem: Products not/too little known and/or not perceived according to actual value
- Context: Flanders (1990-2024): evolution from 'waste' disposal/burning to closing cycle through quality products
- Objective: Create differentiated, well-known and appreciated organic soil improvers/fertilisers from biowaste



Implementation

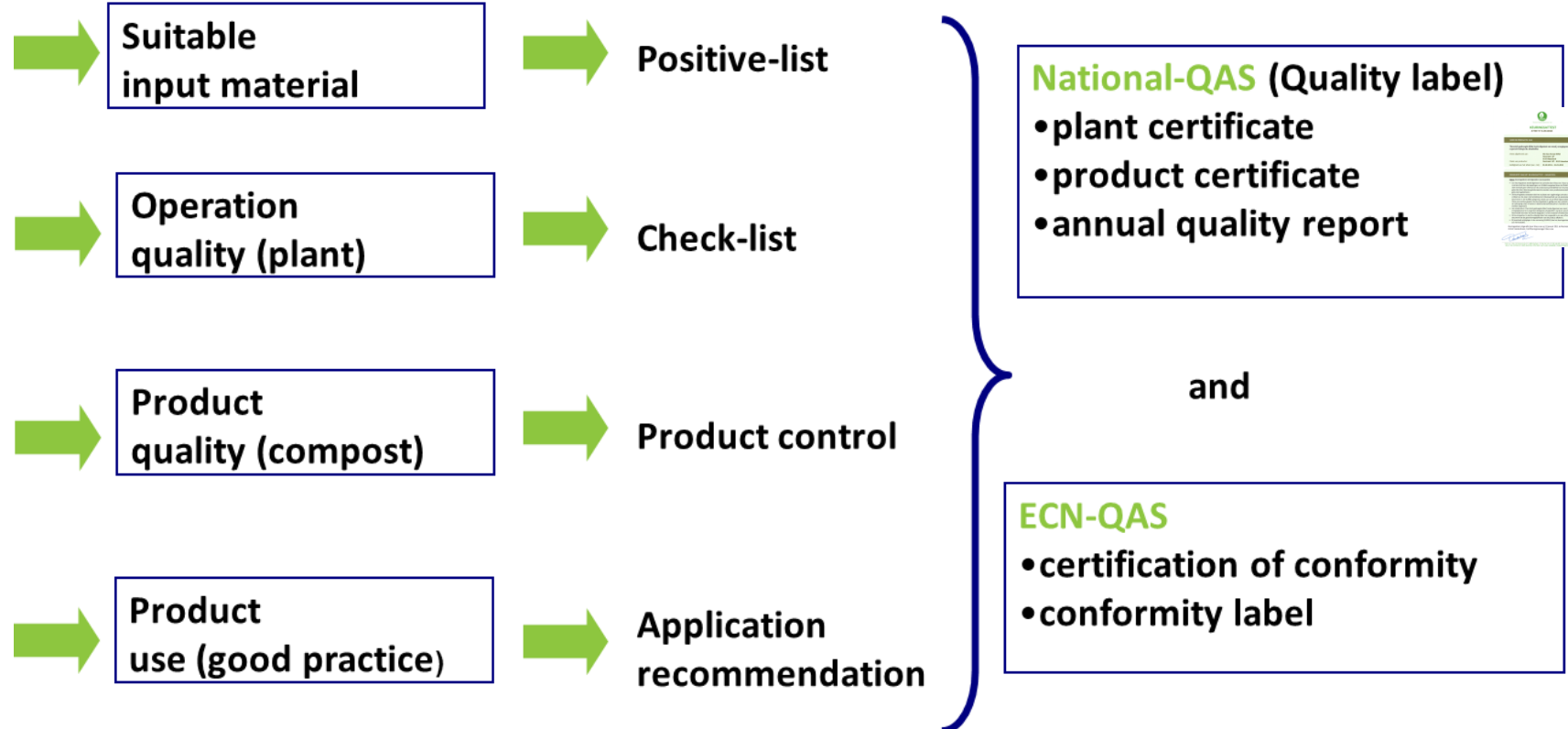
- Timescale: 1992-2024
(QA/marketing/research/..)
- Resources needed: Time/person-months, marketing plan, consultation (working groups etc) & collaboration
- Actors: Vlaco, Vlaco members, OVAM, FOD Volksgezondheid



Implementation



Implementation - Quality Assurance



Implementation - Marketing



Implementation – detail – Marketing

- Strategic plan (2024)

"4 P's"

- Focal point 2: 'Smart Marketing'

(innovation, product differentiation,
demonstration, communication,..)

- Targets & actions & indicators

- 1-2 per year: marketing working groups (Vlaco & members)

- Yearly evaluation & update every 5 years

Implementation – Marketing strategy - 4 P's

- Place
- Product
- Price
- Promotion

Marketing strategy - 4 P's - PLACE

- Each **Vlaco-member/producer** organises its own market
- **Storage** necessary (seasonal market)
- **Transport** cost relatively high → importance of
 - good managing of loads/shipments
 - local sale
- ... optimised to reach **different target groups**: choice (°92) to **diversify** markets (> agriculture)

Marketing strategy - 4 P's - PLACE

End users

- Agriculture
- Horticulture (incl arboriculture)
- Landscape gardening/public authorities/private gardeners

Often via intermediary users/producers

- Producers of organic fertilisers/soil improvers
- Producers of potting soil
- Soil mixers
- Contractors

No direct sales (under Vlaco-member brand) via gardening centers

Marketing strategy - 4 P's - PLACE



@ composting site (big bags, bags or bulk)



@ home/customer (big bags or bulk delivered)



Vlaco also stimulates selling of compost (bags and/or bulk) at recycling parks – logic: closing the loop!

Marketing strategy - 4 P's - PLACE

- Via the online Vlaco map with sales points professionals/households can check:
 - Which products/with which labels/in which packaging...
 - .. are sold at which members' locations (production/recycling parks/...)



Marketing strategy - 4 P's - PRODUCT

- Products for different markets (cfr supra)...
- ... Product differentiation!
 - Tailoring products to different users with different requirements
 - Some crucial elements in shaping differentiated products:
 - Nature/character (standardisation)
 - Labelling
 - Packaging
 - Service

Marketing strategy - 4 P's – PRODUCT: DIFFERENTIATION

- Greencompost
- VFG-compost
- Compost with Vlaco-label
- 'Tuincompost'
- 'Topgazoncompost' (0-5 mm)
- 'Moestuincompost' (development)
- Vlaco potting soil



Marketing strategy - 4 P's – PRODUCT: DIFFERENTIATION

example: increasing demand for **substrates & Vlaco potting soils**

- Since 2012: Vlaco's potting soil composition:
 - 30% green compost
 - 20% bark compost
 - 50% peat



- 4 compost-producers sell potting soil using own compost



Marketing strategy - 4 P's – PRODUCT: DIFFERENTIATION

example: increasing demand for **substrates & Vlaco potting soils**

Table 4. Total estimated market in 2050 based on the expected market increase (Table 2) and a more realistic estimate of the potentially available materials (Table 3).

| | 2017 (Mm ³ y ⁻¹) | 2050 (Mm ³ y ⁻¹) | Increase % |
|---------------|--|--|---------------|
| Peat | 40 | 80 | 200% |
| Coir | 11 | 46 | 418% |
| Wood fibre | 3 | 30 | 1000% |
| Bark | 2 | 10 | 500% |
| Compost | 1 | 5 | 500% |
| Perlite | 1.5 | 10 | 667% |
| Stone wool | 0.9 | 4 | 433% |
| Soils / tuffs | 8 | 33 | 413% |
| New | | 65 | |
| Total | 67 | 283 | |

- Expected increase in the total use of substrates by 2050: 422 %
- For compost: expected increase even 500 %
 - Flemish composting plants: increasing number of enquiries by potting soil manufacturers
 - Since 2021: possibility of using vfg-compost in potting soil in Flanders (small ratio's)

Marketing strategy - 4 P's – PRODUCT: DIFFERENTIATION

- Packaging:
 - Bulk – Bigbag – Bags 40l or 50l
 - Since 2021: bags produced are 50 % recycled plastics (100 % recyclable)



Marketing strategy - 4 P's - PRICE

- Quality product → dare to ask **good price!**
- Price **differentiation** according to quality/volumes/type of use:
 - Soil mixers
 - Professional user: agriculture, landscaper, horticulture, ...
 - Hobbyist

Marketing strategy - 4 P's – PROMOTION

- Coordinated promotion actions according to Vlaco's Strategic plan ('smart marketing') & Communication plan
- Different components of promotion:
 - Sales promotion
 - Personal messages
 - **Publicity**
 - **Awareness raising/sensitising**
 - **Public relations**
- **Some examples:...**

- Advertising in newspapers, (techn.) journals, social media,...
- Commercial spots on (local) TV & radio
- (Yearly) specific actions
- Sponsoring
- Participation in fairs
- ...

4 P's - PROMOTION: examples (campaigns/seminars)

- awareness-raising on **benefits** of compost



- + Results of long-term field trials with compost → Agriculture
- + Options of remuneration for carbon farming → Agriculture
- + Demonstration plots with compost → professional & hobby/CSA-gardening

4 P's - PROMOTION : examples (° tools)

- awareness-raising on footprint: °CO2-tool



- ✓ "To make producers, consumers, governments and knowledge centers more aware of the ecological impact of the organic waste treatment sector and its products."
- ✓ How much CO₂ is saved by using compost or digestate
- ✓ Userfriendly App on website
- ✓ Use social media communication



4 P's - PROMOTION : examples (yearly campaign)

- awareness-raising on 'intrinsic value'

- ✓ calculated based on monetary value of (effective) organic carbon and nutrient content
- ✓ stated on individual Vlaco analysis report
- ✓ also stated on website (for 'average' compost or digestate products):

| | organische stof | | | som nutriënten | | | intrinsieke waarde (€/ton) | | | aandeel nutriënten | aandeel OS |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---|----|----------------|---|-----|----------------------------|---|-----|--------------------|------------|
| product | (€/ton) | | | (€/ton) | | | (€/ton) | | | (%) | (%) |
| groencompost | 26 | - | 36 | 6 | - | 9 | 32 | - | 45 | 19% | 81% |
| gift-compost | 29 | - | 41 | 10 | - | 17 | 39 | - | 58 | 28% | 72% |
| ruw <u>digestaat</u> | 5 | - | 8 | 10 | - | 18 | 15 | - | 26 | 68% | 32% |
| dunne fractie | 1 | - | 3 | 6 | - | 12 | 7 | - | 16 | 81% | 19% |
| dikke fractie | 21 | - | 27 | 17 | - | 28 | 38 | - | 55 | 48% | 52% |
| gedroogd <u>digestaat</u> | 59 | - | 84 | 33 | - | 69 | 92 | - | 152 | 40% | 60% |
| ammoniumsulfaat | 0 | - | 0 | 84 | - | 108 | 84 | - | 108 | 100% | 0% |
| OBA-mest | 34 | - | 49 | 29 | - | 44 | 63 | - | 93 | 47% | 53% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| varkensdrijfmest | 2 | - | 4 | 11 | - | 19 | 13 | - | 22 | 83% | 18% |
| runderstalmest | 15 | - | 22 | 8 | - | 13 | 23 | - | 35 | 36% | 67% |

- ✓ updated annually based on prices of mineral fertilizers....

4 P's - PROMOTION : further examples (members-specific)

- Providing (inter)municipalities with communication material
 - downloadable formats for posters & social media-posts
 - video
 - ...



- A5 (met en zonder snijlijnen)
- A4 (met en zonder snijlijnen)



4 P's - PROMOTION : further examples (publications)



COM IN D

Sinds bouw tuina...

Een t... is de b...

Comp... 100% Bij VL... zeker

Mark... de ov... staat... gezien

Uitrijden van compost

Omdat groen- en gft-compost als traagwerkende meststof erkend zijn, mag u het hele jaar door uitrijden behalve tussen 1 november en 15 januari. De compost mag dan wel opgeslagen worden op de kopakker.

Aangifte en registratie

Als land- en tuinbouwer moet u de compost in uw register, dat ter inzage ligt van de controlerende ambtenaren, opnemen. In de mestbankaangifte moet u de gebruikte compost niet aangeven.

Transport van compost

Compost mag getransporteerd worden door een erkend verzender of een erkend mestvoerder. De erkend verzender maakt het verzenddocument op. Kijk op www.vlaco.be voor erkende verzenders of vraag dit aan uw compostproducent. De erkend mestvoerder zorgt voor de noodzakelijke administratieve afhandeling. Hij doet een voormelding, maakt een mestafzetdocument op dat hij na het transport aan de mestbank bezorgt en doet de namelding.

Waarvoor kunt u terecht bij Vlaco vzw?

Vlaco vzw controleert streng de compostproductie en de kwaliteit van de compost bij de aangesloten compostproducenten. U kunt als land- of tuinbouwer bij Vlaco vzw terecht met al uw vragen over compost, composteren en wetgeving. Vlaco vzw geeft u advies op maat over compostgebruik bij uw teelt. U vindt nuttige informatie en verkoopadressen op onze website.



Vlaco vzw
Stationsstraat 110 | 2800 Mechelen
T: 015 451 370 | info@vlaco.be

ONTDEK OOK DE VLACO-WEBSITE:
www.vlaco.be



Vlaco-compost en het mestdecreet
Hoeveel compost mag u gebruiken?

MEER HALEN UIT DE BIOLOGISCHE KRINGLOOP



4 P's - PROMOTION : further examples (events/online workshops)



**Nutrient Management and Nutrient
Recovery Thematic Network**

WEBINAR

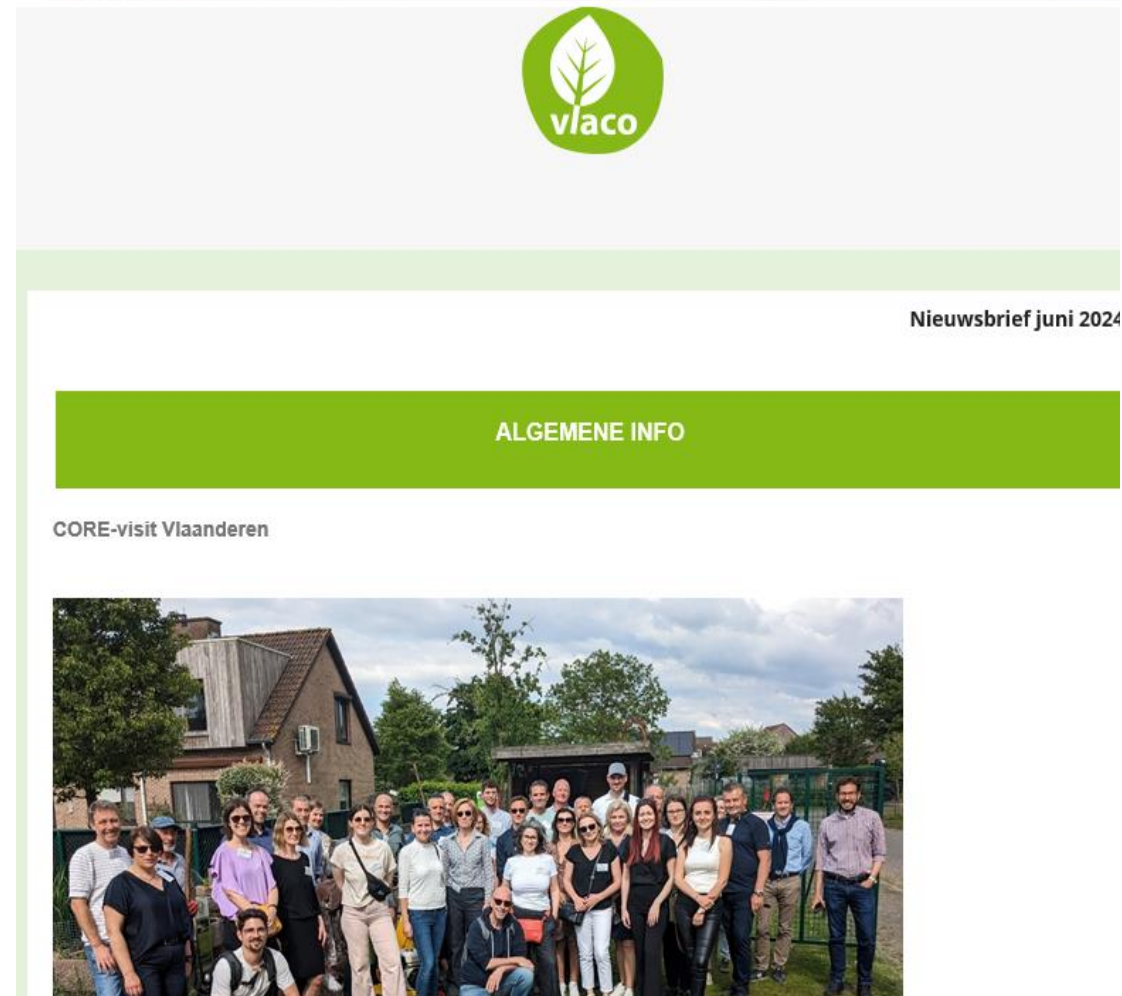


**“CIRCULAIRE MESTOFFEN EN BODEMVERBETERAARS, VAN
INNOVATIVE NAAR PRAKTIJK”**

Donderdag 14 Januari 2021

4 P's - **PROMOTION** : some examples (communication to members)

- Newsletter
- Yearly activity report
- VlacoVaria
- KLZine



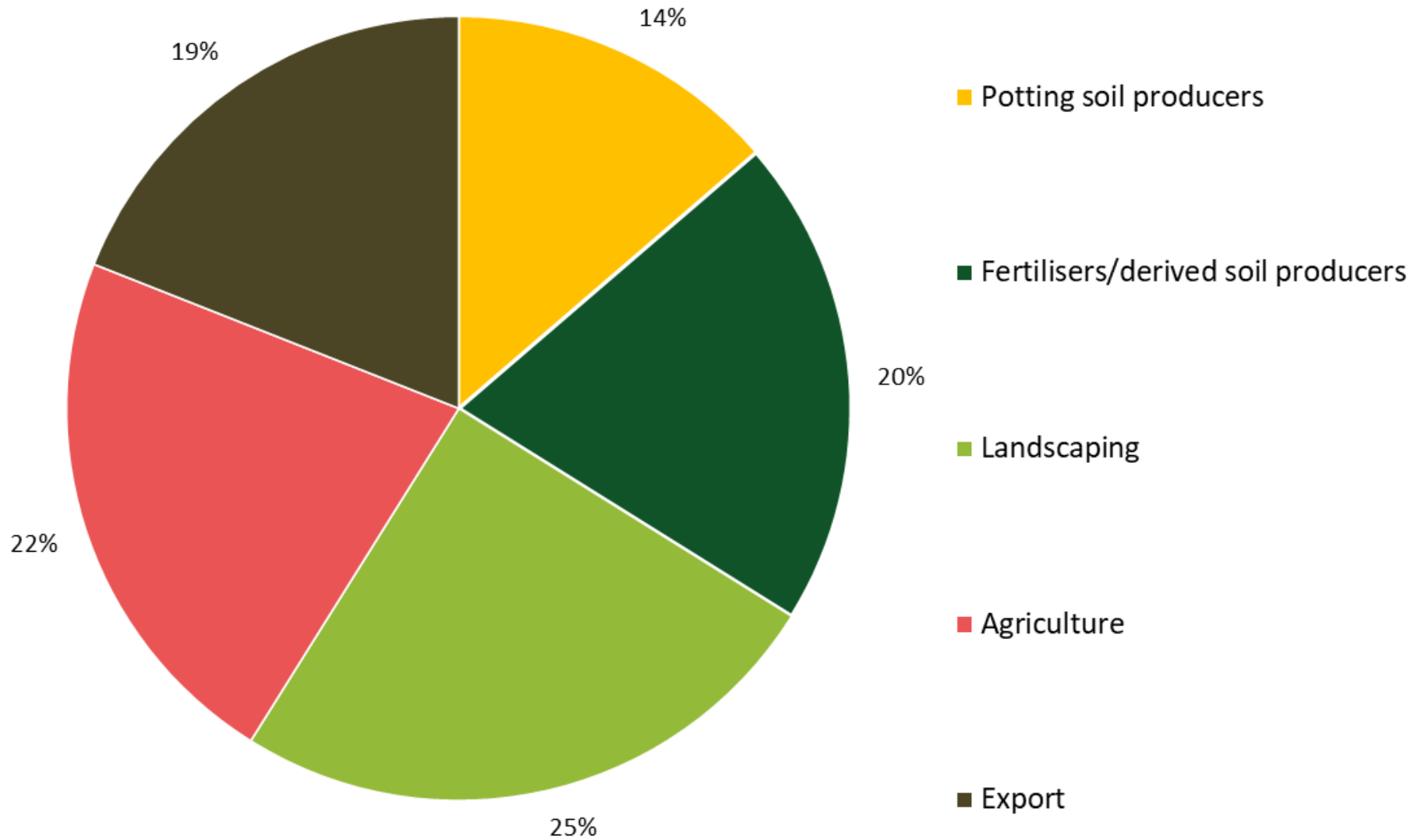
Evidence of success



GREEN

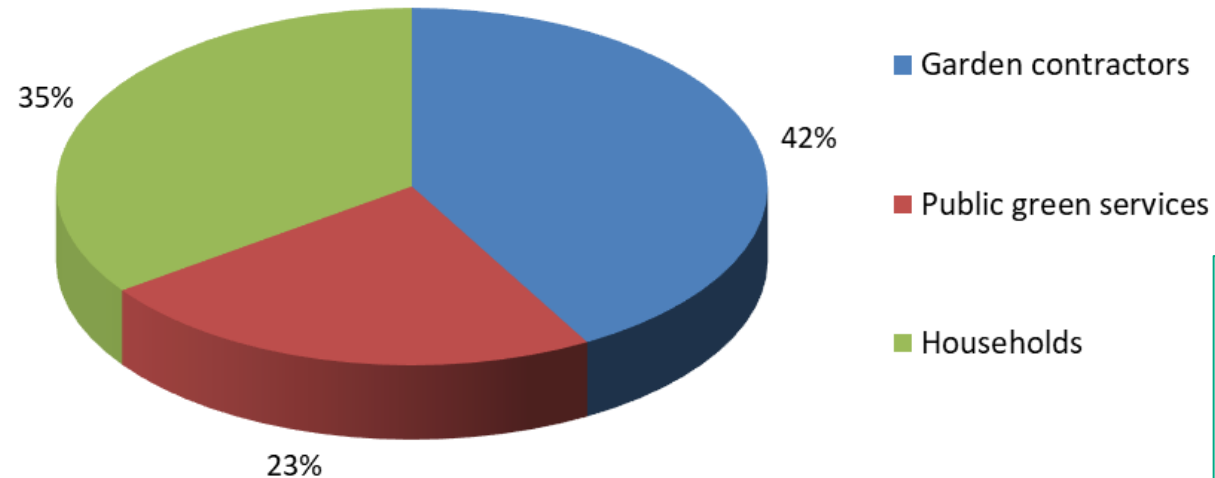
www.interregeurope.eu/CORE

Evidence of success - Compost market in Flanders (2023)

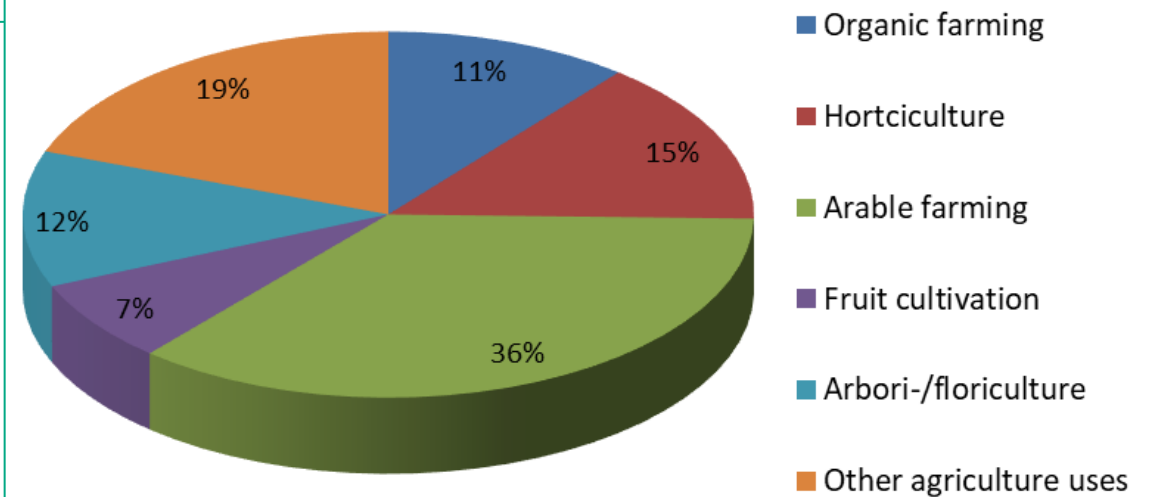


Evidence of success - Compost market in Flanders (2023)

sales in landscaping (detail)



sales in agriculture (detail)



Evidence of success - Evolutions in compost market

- Steadily increasing sales
- Increasing # of end products
- Increasing demand (substrate, carbon farming,...)
- Increasing # of recycling parks (2024: 180) offer compost
- Increasing prices: €3/T → €6/T
- ... and increasing challenges

Lessons learnt

- **Positive**

- One size doesn't fit all
- All 4P's have a role
- With a good plan it is possible to increase quality and to market (differentiate!) these products at increasing prices

- **Negative**

- Continuous & long-term efforts
- Many actors required

- **Challenge**

- Product differentiation requires research
- Uphold/improve quality vs
 - more impurities?
 - lagging woody input material?



GREEN

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**Time for
questions**



Thank you!

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