

Overview	
Country	Spain
Type of organization	SME
Number of employees	10
Type of practice	Good practice
Level of investment	Low
Activity type	Collecting waste
Key words	Waste collection

Summary

www.ekogras.es

Ekogras is an SME based in Spain that specializes in the collection and recycling of used cooking oils from households, restaurants, and industries. By providing efficient oil collection services and dedicated infrastructure, Ekogras helps prevent improper disposal and environmental pollution.

The collected oils are transported to processing facilities, where they are converted into biodiesel and other eco-friendly products by partner companies. Ekogras operates in both the private sector—mainly serving restaurants and hotels—and the public sector by installing recycling bins in cities for citizens.

Founded to tackle the environmental problem of waste cooking oil, Ekogras also promotes public awareness about recycling and collaborates on social inclusion projects, playing an important role in renewable energy and environmental protection.

Background and origin

Ekogras was founded to address the problem of improper disposal of used cooking oils, which can cause significant water and soil pollution. The company established an efficient collection system for waste oils from households and the food industry, enabling their conversion into biodiesel. Over time, Ekogras has become a key player in reducing environmental impact and supporting renewable energy production in Spain.

Relevance to the craft sector

Ekogras's activities, while not directly linked to traditional crafts, offer significant value for educational and vocational training programs, especially in gastronomy and food-related sectors. By integrating waste oil collection systems into schools or training centers, future chefs and hospitality professionals can develop strong habits in sustainability and environmental responsibility. This practice helps raise awareness among students about the importance of recycling cooking oil and the environmental consequences of improper disposal.

Furthermore, Ekogras's model can inspire other sectors—including crafts that may use oils in processes such as soap making or candle making—to adopt similar sustainable waste management practices. The structured approach to waste collection and recycling also demonstrates how small and medium-sized enterprises can contribute to the circular economy and collaborate with social inclusion projects, further increasing its relevance for modern, sustainability-focused training environments



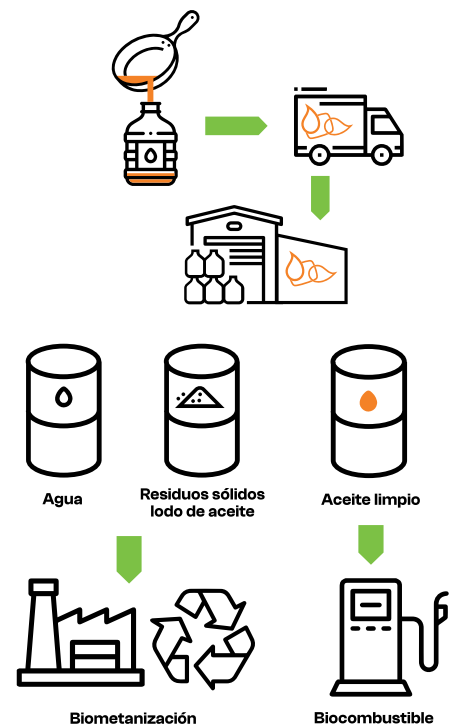
Target groups

- Hotels and restaurants: Major generators of used cooking oil, needing efficient disposal solutions.
- Households: Individuals who require easy and responsible ways to recycle cooking oil.
- Biodiesel manufacturers: Companies that purchase used oil for conversion into biodiesel and other products.
- Municipalities and public sector: Partners for installing recycling infrastructure in cities.
- Social projects and organizations: Collaborators on inclusion and environmental awareness initiatives

Material focus - type of waste material involved

Ekogras focuses on the collection and management of used cooking oils as its primary waste material. This includes oils generated in large quantities by restaurants, hotels, and food industries, as well as smaller amounts produced in households. These oils, if disposed of improperly, can cause significant environmental damage, contaminating water sources and soil.

Once collected, the used cooking oil is transported to specialized processing facilities, where it is refined and converted into biodiesel—a renewable and eco-friendly fuel. In addition to biodiesel, other secondary eco-friendly products can also be produced from the processed oil, depending on the needs of partner companies. By providing a system for the safe and efficient collection of waste oil, Ekogras helps close the loop in the food and energy sectors, turning a common pollutant into a valuable resource and supporting the circular economy.



Source: www.ekogras.es

Stakeholders involved

- Local municipalities and waste management authorities: Support and oversee collection infrastructure.
- Restaurants and food industry businesses: Main suppliers of used oil.
- Renewable energy companies: Purchase the collected oil for biodiesel production.
- Social projects and NGOs: Partners for inclusion and social development.
- Technical and research entities: Support process improvement (e.g., Tecnalía, Ihobe, Azti)

Professionals involved and their roles

- Waste management specialists: Organize and supervise oil collection and processing.
- Logistics teams: Coordinate efficient transport of used oil.
- Drivers: Collect and deliver oil and containers between sites.

These professionals ensure the smooth operation of the entire collection and recycling system

Connection of the practice with the project-identified needs

Knowledge of Waste Materials

Ekogras demonstrates strong knowledge of waste materials by safely handling and collecting used cooking oil, understanding the regulations and best practices for its storage and transport, and ensuring its proper conversion into biodiesel and other eco-friendly products. This expertise helps prevent environmental pollution and supports sustainable waste management.

Green Entrepreneurial Skills

Ekogras showcases green entrepreneurial skills by developing a scalable business model for waste oil collection, integrating circular economy principles, and participating in publicly funded R&D projects. The company adapts to regulatory requirements and collaborates with partners to expand its impact in renewable energy and environmental protection.

Creativity and Innovative Solutions

Ekogras introduces innovation mainly through its user-centered logistics system, especially public oil collection points that automatically wash and return containers to users. The company also explores new recycling avenues, such as collaborating on projects to convert coffee residues into animal feed, demonstrating adaptability and creative problem-solving in waste management.



Methodological approach to implement the practice

Process description - step by step instructions for implementing the practice

1. Collect used cooking oil from households, restaurants, and businesses using dedicated bins and containers.
2. Transport the collected oil to processing facilities.
3. Convert the oil into biodiesel and other eco-friendly products (done by partner companies).
4. Distribute the biodiesel to energy markets.

This process relies on efficient logistics and public awareness to ensure high collection rates.



Source: www.ekogras.es

Related Resources that have been developed

Ekogras has established a robust collection infrastructure, which includes specialized bins placed in public areas and at client locations, such as restaurants and hotels, to facilitate the safe and convenient disposal of used cooking oil. In public collection points, the system is designed to automatically wash and return containers to users, promoting reuse and reducing waste.

In addition to physical infrastructure, Ekogras runs awareness campaigns and educational programs aimed at informing both businesses and the general public about the environmental importance of recycling used cooking oil. These initiatives are crucial for increasing participation rates, ensuring proper disposal, and supporting the company's overall impact on environmental protection and circular economy goals.

End product

The main end product of Ekogras's practice is biodiesel, produced from the recycled used cooking oil. Additional eco-friendly industrial products can also be made from the processed oil, depending on the needs of partner companies. These products contribute to renewable energy and help reduce environmental pollution.

Sources of funding for this intervention

Ekogras's activities are funded through participation in multiple publicly funded R&D projects, such as Hazitek and Next Generation programs, which provide government support for innovation and sustainability initiatives.



Source: www.ekogras.es

Innovation, novel methods or technologies used

Ekogras's main innovation is its user-centered logistics system, especially public collection points that wash and return containers for reuse. This approach increases citizen participation and circularity. While the core recycling technology is standard, Ekogras's operational model and ongoing collaboration on new recycling projects, like converting coffee residues, show adaptability and commitment to innovation in waste management.

Obstacles and challenges faced

One of the main challenges Ekogras has faced is ensuring consistent and proper collection of used cooking oil from a wide range of sources, including households and businesses. Motivating people to participate in recycling and maintaining efficient logistics for collection and transport have required significant effort. The company has needed to invest in robust infrastructure and run ongoing public awareness campaigns. Additionally, adapting operations to meet the needs of different customers and collaborating with partners for new recycling projects have posed further challenges. Overcoming these obstacles has been essential for achieving high collection rates and environmental impact.

Steps further and plans for the future

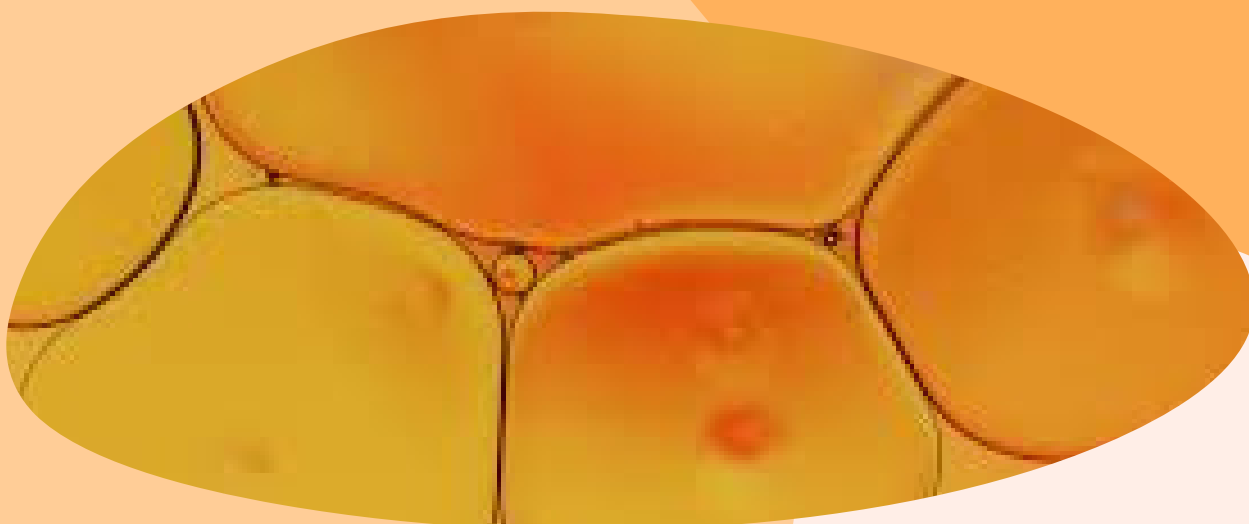
Looking ahead, Ekogras plans to expand its recycling services to include other types of waste from its customers, such as coffee residues. The company aims to develop new projects, like producing animal feed from coffee waste, and continue collaborating with partners in R&D. Ekogras will also strengthen public awareness initiatives and invest in improving its collection infrastructure, maintaining its focus on innovation and sustainability in waste management.

Key impacts - environmental, economic & social

Ekogras's key impacts are environmental, economic, and social. Environmentally, the company reduces water contamination by recycling used cooking oil and supports renewable energy production. Economically, it creates business opportunities in the biofuel sector. Socially, Ekogras raises public awareness about waste oil recycling and collaborates with social inclusion projects, supporting community development and inclusion.

Qualities and criteria's to consider the practice effective, efficient, sustainable, transferable

Qualities	
Effectiveness: How well does the practice achieve its goals?	Ekogras's practice is effective, as shown by over 25 years of continuous operation and constant development. While exact quantities of recycled oil are not provided, the company's longevity and steady market presence indicate strong achievement in waste reduction and environmental protection
Efficiency: Does the practice minimize resources while maximizing outputs?	Yes, Ekogras's practice is efficient because it uses waste oil as a free raw material and requires only moderate investment in transport and infrastructure. This minimizes resource input while maximizing the environmental and economic value of collected oil.
Sustainability: Does the practice contribute to environmental protection, social equality and long-term viability?	Yes, Ekogras's practice contributes to sustainability by preventing water contamination, promoting renewable energy, and supporting social equity through collaboration with social inclusion projects. Its ongoing operation and adaptability ensure long-term viability in waste management.
Transferability: Are the methods transferable in different contexts?	Yes, Ekogras's methods are transferable and can be implemented in other regions with proper infrastructure and organization. The model is scalable and accessible even for small companies, as it does not require high technological investment.



Required Competences for the best practice implementation

Activities-to-competences mapping

Associated competences	
Knowledge	Handling and regulations of used oil, environmental policies, and circular economy principles.
Skills	Logistics for collection and transport, basic technical skills for waste management operations.
Attitudes	Strong commitment to sustainability, openness to innovation, and awareness of community and environmental impactEkogras

Training needs required for successful implementation

Successful implementation requires:

- basic training in waste oil legislation
- Collection logistics
- Sustainability awareness to ensure proper handling
- Compliance
- Effective public engagement

Lessons learned

- Public awareness campaigns improve oil collection efficiency
- Strong partnerships with municipalities enhance impact

References / links

- Ekogras: <https://www.ekogras.es/>
- Hazitek Program: <https://www.spri.eus/en/hazitek-programme/>
- Next Generation EU: https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en



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