

Belém inaugurates its first public composting system to reduce emissions and manage organic waste

Mechanized unit will process up to 180 tons per month and remain as a legacy for the city after COP30



Composting unit at Igapó to be installed in Belém. Credit: Giodarno Toldo

The capital of Pará is set to receive its first public composting facility for organic waste. The initiative is led by Instituto Pólis, with support from the Global Methane Hub (GMH), the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MMA), the Municipality of Belém (through SEZEL – Municipal Secretariat for Urban Conservation and Maintenance), the Executive Secretariat for Productive Inclusion, and SEBRAE. The installation will be completed before the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30), in November, and will remain as a permanent legacy for Belém and a reference for Brazil's Northern Region.

The new unit will use mechanized rotary drum technology capable of processing 150 tons of food waste per month, reaching up to 180 tons when including pruning and yard waste.

The project aims to strengthen organic waste recycling and establish composting as a long-term solution for Belém, while diverting waste from landfills, cutting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and fostering a just transition through the integration of waste pickers.

“Composting carried out with waste pickers represents a strategic opportunity to expand the recycling of organic waste in Brazil, especially considering that about 90% of dry waste recycling is already conducted by the work of waste pickers. By integrating them into this process, it is possible to promote a just transition in waste management, with significant socio-environmental benefits”, says **Victor H. Argentino**, Project Coordinator at Instituto Pólis.

Installation of the system will begin in mid-October. Instituto Pólis will provide ongoing technical support and training, encouraging replication of similar facilities and strengthening public policies for organic waste management in Belém.

“Today, more than 50% of what Belém sends to the landfill is compostable and organic waste — the city still does not have public coverage for this type of processing. Our composting facility, initially implemented to serve COP30, will be a historic milestone for our city, which will have the capacity to process 15 tons per day with specific machinery that accelerates the cycle, in partnership with Instituto Pólis. This is a concrete step in SEINP’s work to seek alternatives to increase the diversion rate of waste from the landfill and advance the sustainable management of solid waste, as well as the socio-productive inclusion of waste picker cooperatives in Belém,” says **Pamela Massoud**, Executive Secretary for Productive Inclusion (SEZEL).

During COP30, the facility will handle about 5 tons of daily organic waste generated over 12 days of the event. Beyond this, it will integrate waste picker cooperatives, family farmers, and local projects such as Composta Belém, Compostagem na Real, and Usinas da Paz. The compost produced will be primarily used in family farming, closing the organic waste cycle.

“The inauguration of Belém’s first public composting unit is a landmark for the city and a reference point for the Amazon region, which urgently needs decentralized, low-cost solutions to manage solid waste,” says **Adalberto Maluf**, National Secretary for Urban Environment, Water Resources, and Environmental Quality at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MMA).

According to the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Estimation System (SEEG, 2022), organic waste disposal in landfills and dumps is the second-largest source of methane in Brazil, responsible for nearly 10% of the country’s emissions. In Belém, the situation is even more critical: waste accounts for 31.5% of GHG emissions and 99% of methane emissions in the city.

“We are taking a concrete step towards a sustainable development model that combines technological innovation, social inclusion, and environmental preservation. This initiative, which will remain as a legacy for the city after COP30, demonstrates that it is possible to transform an environmental challenge into an opportunity to generate employment, strengthen family farming, and reduce pollution. This is just one example, within a broader package of initiatives for organic waste recovery, that Brazil is committed to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, especially methane, in line with the international climate commitments assumed by the country,” completa Maluf.

Brazil Composta Cultiva: Scaling composting across Brazil

Through the [*Brazil Composta Cultiva*](#) initiative, Instituto Pólis promotes large-scale actions for organic waste management in Brazilian municipalities. The project seeks to reduce landfill disposal of organics, increase recycling, mitigate methane emissions, and strengthen municipal composting nationwide.

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