

Long-Term Efficacy of Integrated Constructed Wetlands for Pollutant Removal Using Biowaste Materials

Authors : Khadija Kraiem, Salma Bessadok, Dorra Tabassi, and Atef Jaouani

Abstract : This study investigated the long-term impact of incorporating biowaste (i.e., cork and date stones) as a natural and cost-effective alternative to traditional substrates (e.g., gravel) in constructed wetlands (CWs). Results showed that pollutant removal efficiency was significantly improved after the addition of biowaste under different hydraulic retention time (HRT) conditions. The addition of cork in vertical flow constructed wetlands (VFCWs) improved chemical oxygen demand (COD) removal from 64% to 86%. Similarly, in horizontal flow constructed wetlands (HFCWs), COD removal increased from 67% to 81% with cork and 85% with date seeds. In terms of ammonium removal, cork in VFCWs increased efficiency from 34% to 56%, while in HFCWs; it improved from 24% to 47% with cork and reached 44% with date stones. Furthermore, our data showed that the addition of biowastes improved the removal of micropollutants, such as bisphenol A (BPA) and diclofenac (DFC), with the highest removal of BPA of 86% and DFC of 89% observed in the date seeds wetland. However, no significant changes were observed in pathogens removal. The evaluation of the impact of biowaste addition on the contribution of plant species and its interaction with hydraulic retention time (HRT) was also conducted to pollutant removal. The addition of biowaste resulted in a decrease in the required HRT for effective contaminant elimination, but it had no notable impact on the contribution of plant species.

Keywords : biowaste, constructed wetlands, micropollutants, wastewater treatment

Conference Title : ICWMRE 2025 : International Conference on Waste Management, Recycling and Environment

Conference Location : Barcelona, Spain

Conference Dates : June 05-06, 2025