

2024 figures

Paper-cardboard has been successfully selectively collected for recycling for years. Paper fibres can be reused 5 to 7 times. To optimise convenience for the general public, all household paper-cardboard, i.e. both packaging and non-packaging, is collected together. To calculate the recycling percentage for packaging and the distribution of costs between industry and the intermunicipal organisations, a legally defined formula is used.

Collection scenario

Door-to-door collection, supplemented by collection at recycling parks.



Materials and equipment

- Paper
- Cardboard

Where is the material recycled?

Netherlands 18%



European recycling targets

75% (2025) 85% (2030)

Recyclate applications

Collected papercardboard is processed into printed paper or new cardboard boxes and packaging.

Recycling process

Printed paper and packaging/non-packaging cardboard are separated, creating two grades. Both are mixed (separately) with water to form a pulp. Paint, staples, varnish, glue, plastic and string are removed from the paper pulp. For the production of certain types of paper, the pulp is de-inked and bleached. The pulp is then pressed and dried and is ready for further processing.



24,7 kg

of paper-cardboard packaging per inhabitant recycled

282 kT

of recycled paper-cardboard packaging

The new Fost Plus accreditation took effect in 2024. One of the provisions was a changed paper-cardboard distribution formula so as to represent contemporary consumption patterns more realistically. Together with the growth of foreign e-commerce online stores that don't always meet their obligations, we're seeing a significant rise in the recycling rate of papercardboard.



A recycling rate > 100%?

- Printed paper and packaging/non-packaging cardboard are collected together. The packaging companies cover the cost of the packaging share based on a distribution formula. Due to changes to this formula, the share of packaging is higher. Analyses also show that some of the paper-cardboard packaging collected is commercial and were therefore declared to Valipac. The recycling figures for paper-cardboard should therefore be interpreted together with those of Valipac. Fost Plus and Valipac are working on a new estimate of the overall market for household and commercial paper-cardboard packaging. This should allow clearer recycling rates to be communicated in future, for both market share and the overall market.
- Single-use paper-cardboard packaging from purchases made abroad
- Paper-cardboard packaging from companies that put
 300 kg of packaging on the market per year (exempt from declaration)
- Paper-cardboard packaging from freeriders (companies that do not fulfil their packaging responsibilities and do not declare their packaging).

152%* for members* of Fost Plus



*approx. 84% of all packaging on the Belgian market (by weight) comes from Fost Plus members. The rest is purchased by consumers abroad (cross-border purchases) or sold by businesses that consciously or unconsciously evade their take-back obligation (so-called free-riders).

How is that possible?





Numerator = recycled paper-cardboard, in weight

Denominator = paper-cardboard packaging declared by Fost Plus members, in weight

If numerator > denominator

➡ recycling percentage +100 %



How is the recycling percentage calculated?

The recycling percentage is calculated when the recycling actually takes place, after removing any contaminants and unsuitable materials from the sorted bales. The method used has been determined at European level and validated by the Interregional Packaging Commission (IRPC).