



PAPER-CARDBOARD

2025 figures

Paper-cardboard has been successfully selectively collected for recycling for years. In practice, paper fibres are reused 5 to 7 times. In ideal conditions, fibres can be recycled up to 25 times or more. To optimise convenience for the general public, all household papercardboard, 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

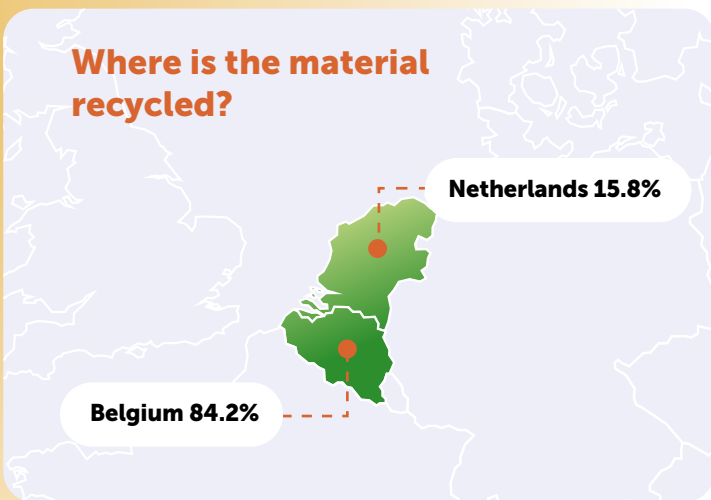
Door-to-door collection, supplemented by collection at recycling parks.



Materials and equipment

- Paper
- Cardboard

Where is the material recycled?



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.

277 kT

of recycled paper-cardboard packaging



23.7 kg

of paper-cardboard packaging per inhabitant recycled

European recycling targets



75% (2025)
85% (2030)

Recyclate applications

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

A recycling rate > 100%?

- Printed paper and (packaging) cardboard are collected together. The packaging companies cover the costs for the share of packaging via a distribution key, whereby 53% of the collected paper-cardboard is attributed to them.
- A portion of the collected paper-cardboard packaging is of commercial origin and was declared with Valipac. The recycling figures for paper-cardboard from both organisations must therefore be viewed together. Fost Plus and Valipac have therefore made a new estimate of the total market for household and commercial paper-cardboard packaging. This should allow for more unambiguous recycling percentages to be communicated in the future, both in relation to the market share and in relation to the total 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). This is further reinforced by the growing success of (foreign) e-commerce companies, which often are not (yet) affiliated with Fost Plus.

Recycling rate for members* of Fost Plus

146%*



**approx. 81% 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?

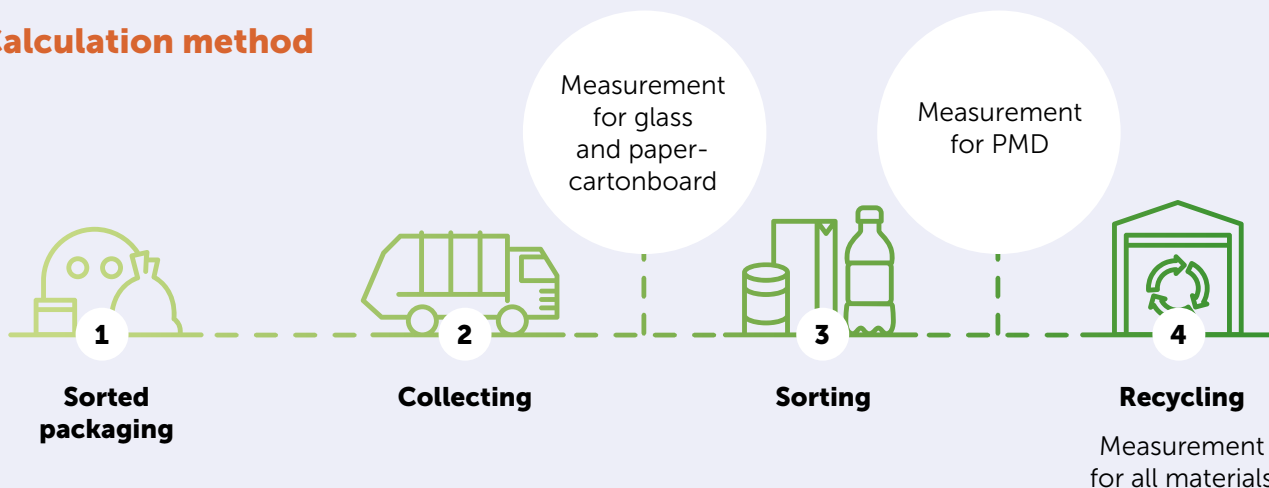
$$\frac{\text{Numerator}}{\text{Denominator}} = \text{Recyclage-percentage}$$

Numerator = recycled paper-cardboard, in weight

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

If numerator > denominator
➔ recycling percentage +100 %

Calculation method



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).

