



Interregionale  
Verpakkingscommissie  
Commission Interrégionale  
de l'Emballage

## ACTIVITY REPORT 2013



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# Message from the Chairman and Director



Danny Wille, Chairman

Marc Adams, Acting Director

The Interregional Packaging Commission (IRPC) faced a number of major challenges in 2013.

First of all, companies placing more than 300 tonnes of packaging on the Belgian market were due to submit their 2013-2016 packaging prevention plan by 30 June. The IRPC used an electronic web form for the submission of individual prevention plans for the first time in 2010, but there was clearly room for improvement. In early 2012 it therefore set about devising a new web form for individual prevention plans. The aim was to substantially simplify the process for companies responsible for packaging (referred to as "responsible companies") and to make the assessment of these plans by the IRPC easier and more accurate. Work also got under way on a new web form for sectoral prevention plans. A few teething problems were experienced, but these were quickly resolved. Only a small number of prevention plans had been

submitted by the end of 2013. The IRPC therefore sent out a reminder letter to the relevant companies and federations in December. We hope to be able to assess all the prevention plans in the first half of 2014.

The computerisation project is very important to the IRPC. The aim is to simplify administrative procedures for companies as much as possible, while at the same time making the most efficient use of the IRPC's limited financial and human resources. The steady decline in IRPC staff numbers forces us to focus on computerisation. The IRPC's software developer has encountered considerable delays for various reasons, which makes our work very difficult.

Another important aspect of the computerisation project is the new take-back (i.e. recycling and recovery) obligation web form for use by responsible companies that fulfil this obligation themselves rather

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than through an accredited compliance organisation. It was not possible to start using this form in early 2013, as originally planned. However, all the preparatory work was completed in the second half of 2013 and the form was introduced at the beginning of 2014.

Finally, an integrated database of Belgian responsible companies needs to be created on the basis of electronic submissions by the accredited compliance organisations, Fost Plus and Val-I-Pac. This database should be ready in the first half of 2014.

Another issue arose in what has been the busiest period for years: the renewal of Fost Plus's accreditation. The accreditation granted in 2008 expired on 31 December, and Fost Plus submitted its application for renewal at the end of June.

The IRPC analysed Fost Plus's application for renewal of its accreditation very thoroughly. Many of Fost Plus's proposals were clearly along the lines of what the Belgian regions wanted, but others received little or no support from the regions. The IRPC was particularly interested in Fost Plus's proposal to have monitoring costs for intermunicipalities shared in a different way, based more on a fixed amount, and to pay a bonus to intermunicipalities with low residues of PMD (plastic bottles, metal packaging and drink cartons) and clean bottle bank sites. However, there were a number of practical objections, which meant that it eventually proved impossible to accept this proposal. In particular, the regions were concerned that insufficient account would be taken of local circumstances that were beyond the control of the intermunicipality concerned but that could have a detrimental effect on PMD residues and the cleanliness of bottle bank sites.

The IRPC organised various consultations with stakeholders with a view to reaching an informed decision on renewal of the accreditation. We should like to take this opportunity to thank the various parties consulted for their valuable contributions. We should also like to thank Fost Plus for its open-minded attitude throughout the consultation process.

In the end, the IRPC only needed two additional meetings in late 2013 to reach a consensus on the

wording of the accreditation, which was granted on 19 December.

One of the main challenges for the new accreditation was improving the collection of plastics. For years, the blue bag has been used to collect only some household plastics: bottles, which are made of either PET or HDPE. High-grade recycling is straightforward for these two types of plastic, and they are very common on the Belgian market. Consequently, recycling is more than justified on both environmental and economic grounds.

Some other plastics, such as household film contaminated by food residues, cannot be recycled at all. A mixed plastic stream (all types of plastic together) can be recycled, but high-grade recycling is not normally feasible. Generally speaking, this type of recycling is possible only when a single type of plastic is collected separately and the stream is relatively free from contamination.

In preparation for the accreditation application, the IRPC commissioned a comprehensive study into the options for expanding the collection of household plastics, for example by allowing more types of plastic to be placed in the blue bag. There were two reasons for this. The first was a clear demand from some sections of the public for simpler sorting procedures. In addition, there had been intimations from various sources that sorting techniques in our sorting plants might be able to cope with a broader P fraction.

However, the IRPC study clearly showed that allowing other plastic fractions into the blue bag is not currently a good idea. Site visits to sorting plants in France and Germany, which already follow the "broader P fraction" approach, revealed that the quantity of plastic undergoing high-grade recycling was significantly less in these two countries than in Belgium. France, for example, accepts butter tubs and yoghurt pots into the "broader P fraction", which suggests that they will be recycled, but apparently they end up being incinerated. In Germany a deposit is charged on PET bottles so that they go for high-grade recycling, but almost all other plastics are incinerated or enter a low-grade recycling stream. It seems impossible to reconcile

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the joint collection of all plastics/residual plastics with high-grade recycling, and this approach would be a considerable step backwards for Belgium from an environmental point of view. So alternatives had to be sought.

Since the last Fost Plus accreditation was granted, article 8 of the accreditation text has provided for a payment to be made by Fost Plus to intermunicipalities that wish to collect plastics other than bottles on their own initiative for subsequent recycling. Under the previous accreditation, this payment amounted to half the reference cost (i.e. the average cost of selective collection).

In the new accreditation, this payment has been doubled to the reference cost.

In this context, Fost Plus is also tasked with actively promoting the collection of residual plastics. The three Belgian regions are aiming to introduce a dual collection system for plastics nationwide by the end of the accreditation period. We will continue to collect plastic bottles via the blue bag for high-grade recycling, and will also retain other high-grade recycling streams such as the expanded polystyrene (EPS) stream. We also wish to introduce a joint selective collection system for other plastics, for which high-grade recycling is not an option, so that they no longer have to be incinerated but can be recycled, though perhaps into a slightly lower-grade product.

We firmly believe this is the best solution for the environment.

The IRPC also wanted to use the new Fost Plus accreditation to demonstrate more flexibility and to tailor the system more closely to the needs of municipalities in terms of methods for collecting household packaging waste. One of the key points on which we wish to take action is the installation of additional underground bottle banks. You can find more information about the new Fost Plus accreditation elsewhere in this activity report. We encourage you to read it carefully.

Please also take a look at the section containing our Belgian recycling figures. We are European champions when it comes to both household and industrial/commercial packaging waste. Once again, no other EU Member State performed better in 2012. What makes this performance particularly impressive is that we also have a far higher level of high-grade recycling than our neighbours. This has enabled us to significantly reduce the costs of selective collection and recycling for businesses and consumers alike. The sale of selectively collected materials for recycling covers half the costs of collection.

Danny Wille, Chairman



Marc Adams, Acting Director



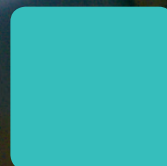
# 1 THE OPERATION OF THE INTERREGIONAL PACKAGING COMMISSION (IRPC)

## 1.1. THE COMPOSITION OF THE IRPC

The Interregional Packaging Commission is made up of a decision-making body, whose members are appointed by the regional governments, and a Permanent Secretariat comprising officials from the three Belgian regions.

The decision-making body meets once a month and takes the policy decisions. The chairmanship of the IRPC changes every year on 5 March and rotates among the Belgian regions. In the first half of 2013 the chair was held by Ms Martine Gillet of the Walloon Region, passing to Mr Danny Wille of the Flemish Region on 5 March for the second half of the year.

The director of the IRPC organises the work of the Permanent Secretariat in preparing the policy decisions and in supervising the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement and the accreditations. Mr Marc Adams is acting director of the IRPC. Mr Hugo Geerts is the titular director.



The composition of the decision-making body in 2013 was as follows:

#### FLEMISH REGION

Full members	Alternate members
Anne VANDEPUTTE / Els DE PICKER <sup>1</sup>	Els DE PICKER / Anne VANDEPUTTE <sup>2</sup>
Hugo GEERTS	Anneleen DE WACHTER
Danny WILLE	Geert DE ROOVER / Roeland BRACKE <sup>3</sup>

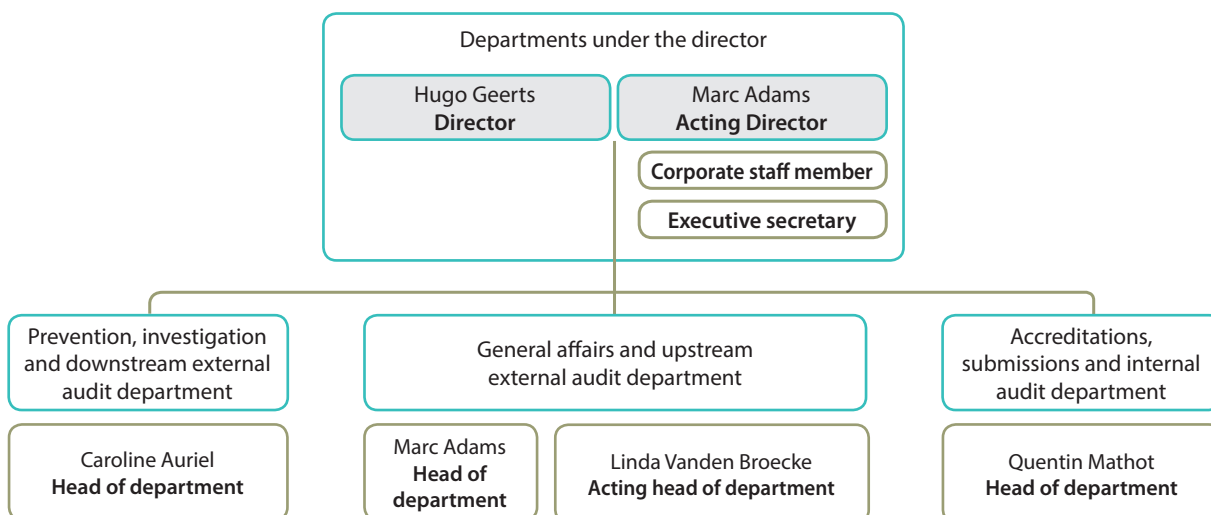
#### BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION

Full members	Alternate members
Griet VAN KELECOM	Valérie VERBRUGGE
Francis RADERMAKER	Françoise BONNET <sup>4</sup>
Julien D'AOUST	Adrien ARNAUD

#### WALLOON REGION

Full members	Alternate members
Martine GILLET	Jean-Yves MERCIER
Ingrid GABRIEL	Christel EVRARD
Laurence LAMBERT / Violaine FICHEFET <sup>5</sup>	Jehan DECROP

The organisational structure of the Permanent Secretariat did not change in 2013.



The Permanent Secretariat had 19 staff in 2013. Once again, this is one fewer than the previous year. When the IRPC was set up in 1997, the Permanent Secretariat had 27 full-time employees. The remit of the IRPC has grown considerably since then, but it has had to cope with an ever-shrinking workforce.

<sup>1</sup> Ms Vandeputte was replaced as full member by Ms De Picker on 6 September 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Ms De Picker was replaced as alternate member by Ms Vandeputte on 6 September 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Mr De Roover was replaced as alternate member by Mr Bracke on 6 September 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Ms Bonnet has not exercised her mandate since December 2012. Ms Céline Schaar has been attending the meetings of the decision-making body in the capacity of regional expert since 10 October 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Ms Lambert was replaced as full member by Ms Fichet on 19 September 2013.

## 1.2. THE IRPC BUDGET FOR 2013

The composition of the IRPC's budget for the 2013 operating year can be summarised as follows:

	Budgeted amounts (in EUR)
Cost of premises	143,300.00
Office costs	122,200.00
Travel and representation expenses	21,000.00
Car fleet running costs	47,000.00
Other general operating costs	194,000.00
Rent of buildings	295,000.00
Specific purchases	45,000.00
Studies and research	75,612.27
Studies and research (b)	65,025.40
Awareness-raising and communications	60,000.00
Taxes	0.00
Investments	27,000.00
<b>GENERAL TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,095,137.67</b>

The amount budgeted for 2013 was exactly the same as in the 2012 budget, i.e. EUR 1,030,112.27. The Belgian regions' decision not to increase the budget clearly reflected their wish for savings to be made on the operating costs.

In early 2013, however, the Belgian regions decided not to deduct the full amount of the surplus on the 2012 budget from the grant that they had to make to the IRPC, as usually happens. A specific decision was taken to spend EUR 65,025.40 from this surplus on a study into the composition of the mixed paper/cardboard stream, which was urgently needed to process Fost Plus's accreditation application. This sum was consequently shifted from the 2012 budget to the 2013 budget, leading to a de facto increase in the IRPC's 2013 budget to almost EUR 1.1 million.

The IRPC's budget is financed by the Belgian regions according to the allocation key set out in the Cooperation Agreement. The proportion of the required sum paid by each region is:

- 60.9% by the Flemish Region,
- 31.5% by the Walloon Region,
- 7.6% by the Brussels-Capital Region.

After deducting part of the budget surplus from 2012, the Belgian regions were liable to pay the following amounts for the 2013 operating year:

	Collective amount (in EUR)
Transfer from OVAM*	582,592.81
Transfer from DGARNE – Office wallon des déchets**	301,341.11
Transfer from Bruxelles Environnement – IBGE***	72,704.52
<b>GENERAL TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>956,638.44</b>

\* [Public Waste Agency of Flanders]

\*\* [Walloon Waste Authority]

\*\*\* [Brussels Institute for Environmental Management]

## 2 THE REVISION OF THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT

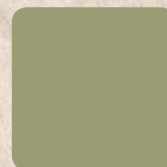
Commission Directive 2013/2/EU, amending Annex I to Directive 94/62/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on packaging and packaging waste, came into force on 7 February 2013. This Directive amends the European list of examples of what is and is not regarded as packaging.

This Directive had to be transposed into national law by 30 September 2013, which is a very short deadline for transposition.

The transposition of this Directive necessitates an amendment to the Cooperation Agreement of 4 November 2008 concerning packaging, which is almost impossible to achieve within eight months.

As our Belgian list of examples of what is and is not packaging was brought in line with the European list in 2012, the amendment to the Cooperation Agreement is in fact merely a formality, but an important formality.

The Cooperation Agreement is not expected to be amended until the second half of 2014.



# 3 THE 2013-2016 PACKAGING PREVENTION PLAN

## 3.1. THE WEB FORMS

2013 was a critical year for the packaging prevention plans. The 2013-2016 individual prevention plans had to be submitted; once again this was done via an electronic form. This submission format also applied to the sectoral prevention plans for the first time.

Work on designing two types of forms began in 2012 and was finished in 2013.

The first was the form for the individual prevention plans, which was an improved and simplified version of the one used to submit the previous prevention plan. A second form was devised for the sectoral prevention plans, using the same basic principles as in the individual prevention plan, albeit adjusted to reflect the particular situation and characteristics of the professional federations submitting a sectoral prevention plan.



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The latest tests, carried out during the first quarter of 2013, highlighted a number of important bugs in the software. The IRPC therefore had to postpone the launch of the software by a few months. The date for submission of the 2013-2016 packaging prevention plans was deferred from 30 June 2013 to 30 September 2013.

During the period in which the responsible companies and the federations were required to draw up packaging prevention plans, several companies and federations experiencing technical or practical problems in using the software contacted the IRPC, which did its best to help them as quickly as possible. Businesses continued to contact the IRPC on a regular basis throughout October and November, indicating that many had still not completed the task by then. The IRPC therefore decided to further extend the deadline for submission of the 2013-2016 packaging prevention plans to 31 January 2014.

### **3.2. INDIVIDUAL AND SECTORAL PREVENTION PLANS**

A total of 689 companies and 22 federations were asked to submit a packaging prevention plan for 2013-2016. Together they account for more than 1.14 million tonnes of one-way packaging out of a total of 1.46 million tonnes, i.e. 78% of the market.

By February 2014, 282 individual and 20 sectoral prevention plans had been submitted. The 20 sectoral prevention plans related to a total of 295 participating companies, which means that 112 companies have apparently failed to comply. Closer investigation is needed to ascertain exactly how many companies have not met their obligations.

The IRPC has given itself six months to analyse all the packaging prevention plans that have been submitted.



# 4 FOST PLUS

## 4.1. ACCREDITATION FOR 2014-2018

Fost Plus received accreditation as a packaging waste management compliance organisation for the fifth time on 19 December 2013. The accreditation came into effect on 1 January 2014 and will expire on 31 December 2018.

The aim of the accreditation is to continue to optimise the management of packaging waste in Belgium by making any necessary changes to the existing system, which does, however, have a proven track record.

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**The main aspects of the new Fost Plus accreditation and the major changes from the previous one are as follows:**

- Article 2 expands the scope of plastics collection. In order to attain the higher plastics recycling target imposed by Europe, Fost Plus must actively promote the collection of residual plastics (plastics other than bottles). Payment for this will be based on the rules set out in article 8. Among other things, Fost Plus is required to develop the proposals needed to ensure that a more harmonised system for the collection of residual plastics is in place by the end of the accreditation period. The Belgian regions are aiming to have systematic collection of residual plastics and to recycle these in the most appropriate way. This will probably not involve the same high-grade recycling as applies to bottles, but should still be a suitable form of recycling that is environmentally and economically sound and that is preferable to incineration.

We also wish to pursue the idea of adding a number of fractions to the blue bag. It is true that a study commissioned by the IRPC in preparation for the accreditation application clearly showed that collecting all plastics in the blue bag would not necessarily lead to the same results as we achieve now. A number of small-scale test projects therefore need to be carried out to ascertain what realistic options there are to expand the blue bag P fraction.

The IRPC would like to thoroughly examine all options, but is not prepared to drop high-grade recycling of plastic bottles for the sake of the “all plastic in one bag” principle. This would not be beneficial to the environment.

- Article 6 focuses on the scenarios in which Fost Plus has to make payments based on the full cost; these are the reference scenarios. There are no drastic changes compared with the previous accreditation, but there have been a number of minor adjustments.

Regarding paper/cardboard, house-to-house collection by means of containers is explicitly introduced into the reference scenarios for the first time. Where collection already takes place in this way, it will now

be paid for based on the full cost. However, not every intermunicipality will be able to switch to house-to-house collection by means of containers in future. Fost Plus's financial liability will be limited to 10% of the population for the duration of this accreditation. The cost of purchasing the containers is not borne by Fost Plus either.

With regard to PMD, there was a definite problem with public cleanliness at some locations where PMD bags are collectively deposited, for example in high-rise buildings. Incorrectly sorted PMD bags were not systematically retrieved by their owner, and so were simply left at the kerbside. A pilot project was launched to deal with this problem. The solution proposed was for house-to-house collection to be temporarily or permanently replaced by the installation of sealed containers, fitted with specific openings for depositing items. This solution has now been incorporated into the accreditation.

The reference scenarios already included a dual collection system for paper/cardboard and PMD. The accreditation now also provides for conventional collection of these two fractions, but at different time intervals (every three weeks). This additional scenario was the subject of a pilot project that received favourable assessment by the IRPC. It has not yet been possible to test the feasibility of implementing this approach on a broader scale, and consequently a positive opinion by the IRPC is needed before this collection scenario can be applied.

If intermunicipalities wish to organise evening or weekend collections for reasons of mobility or because of access problems during the daytime, and if they can show that this is justified, Fost Plus has to bear part of the additional costs of this up to a maximum of 10%.

The reference scenarios for collection remain essentially the same as in the previous accreditation. Intermunicipalities can choose from a wide range of

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scenarios, depending on local needs. The reference framework includes not only the scenarios specifically mentioned, but also any cheaper scenario that is a variation on one of the scenarios described and that achieves an equivalent collection result.

- Article 7 changes the rules governing negotiations for extensions of contracts between Fost Plus and intermunicipalities that manage the work themselves, i.e. using their own staff and resources. Under the previous accreditation, if an intermunicipality failed to come to an agreement with Fost Plus in time, it reverted to payment based on the reference cost, which was often less than the payments under the expiring contract. Under the new accreditation, payments under the old contract remain in effect temporarily so that continuity is assured.
- Article 8 is still a key provision of the accreditation. It specifies that Fost Plus also bears financial responsibility for household packaging waste streams other than the conventional Fost Plus streams, insofar as these can be recycled. This relates to additional collections by intermunicipalities, usually but not necessarily in container parks. The materials involved are mainly plastics other than bottles, such as EPS, plastic film or mixed plastics, but can also be paint tins or aerosol sprays that are collected with household hazardous waste.

The content of article 8 and the procedure for demonstrating effective recycling remain the same, but the payment made by Fost Plus is doubled. The full reference cost is now paid, rather than half. The IRPC therefore expects that intermunicipalities will make more use of this provision than they did previously. This must of course be read in conjunction with article 2, in which Fost Plus is required to take an active role in promoting the collection of additional plastic streams.

The costs of the inspections needed to demonstrate effective recycling may only be deducted from

the payment made by Fost Plus if they are disproportionately high. However, the payment made may never be less than half the reference cost. For example, if an intermunicipality collects plastic film and sells it to a European trader, which sells it on to a Chinese trader, which always supplies it to other end-stage recyclers, it is impossible in practice to ascertain the effectiveness of recycling without arranging regular site visits to China. This can soon become expensive. In contrast, if an intermunicipality opts for a stable recycling chain, the inspection costs will never be disproportionate.

- Article 13 provides for an additional payment of EUR 0.11 per capita to help intermunicipalities improve glass collection. This was already provided for in the previous accreditation.

One new aspect is that Fost Plus is required to draw up an action plan to significantly increase the number of underground bottle banks by the end of the accreditation period. The aim is to have at least 600 more sites for underground bottle banks, evenly distributed throughout the country. The installation costs are to be shared equally between Fost Plus and the intermunicipalities.

Underground bottle banks are certainly more expensive to install, but they offer a number of distinct advantages. For example, litter is less likely to accumulate around them, and they are also less obtrusive in towns with little available space or a historic centre.

- The provisions regarding local communication (article 16) have been slightly amended. Intermunicipalities can now use their own staff to put across the sorting message in order to achieve a more personal approach. Particular attention must be devoted to the issue of blue bags left uncollected because they contain the wrong material.
- As specified in article 21, Fost Plus has to adjust its standard contract with the intermunicipalities, as well as the standard tender specifications for the

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collection, sorting and sale of materials, to reflect the new provisions of the accreditation. It has three months to do this. The IRPC then has a further three months to approve the revised standard contract and standard tender specifications.

The contract award criteria in the standard tender specifications are now subject to a different procedure. The IRPC takes the view that a more intensive debate is necessary for this, and that the intermunicipalities need to play a part in it. Article 23(5) provides for a longer procedure lasting up to one year.

- The tendering rules have been greatly simplified. The most important point is that the principles of public procurement legislation are always respected.
- Article 32 concerns the calculation of the “Green Dot” tariffs, i.e. the tariffs that members pay to Fost Plus. The IRPC has been unable to give definitive approval of the method for calculating these tariffs, as described in the accreditation application. The Belgian regions are of the opinion that the principles for calculating the Green Dot must reduce the impact of packaging on the environment and that they must respect the waste hierarchy in Directive 2008/98/EC.

This means that Fost Plus must formulate revised principles for the calculation of the Green Dot by 30 June 2015 in conjunction with the Interregional Packaging Commission and the Belgian regions.

- The idea of introducing a compulsory sorting logo on all or some household packaging was not upheld. Nevertheless, the IRPC does want Fost Plus and its members to demonstrate responsibility in this regard. This is why article 34 specifies that if Fost Plus members wish to print specific sorting instructions on their packaging, Fost Plus must ensure that the printed instructions are accurate. Fost Plus must also harmonise the approach adopted.

Article 34 also specifies that Fost Plus must examine the consequences of introducing a compulsory sorting logo on all or some household plastic packaging.

- Articles 37 and 38 deal with the financial guarantees that Fost Plus is required to set up for the intermunicipalities. The primary aim of these financial guarantees is to cover the intermunicipalities against the risk of Fost Plus ever ceasing to operate. In the past they were provided only in the form of bank guarantees. The IRPC has now devised a more flexible system to allow Fost Plus to put up the required financial guarantees. This gives intermunicipalities the same legal and factual rights, but is much less expensive for Fost Plus.
- Articles 42-45 are fundamental provisions of the new Fost Plus accreditation. They deal with the collection of household packaging waste from non-household users.

Article 42 is not actually new. It relates to the collection of glass from hotels, restaurants, pubs, etc. and was already in the previous accreditation.

Article 43 primarily concerns the collection of PMD from companies. This collection system was once the subject of a test project involving all stakeholders. The accreditation states that Fost Plus shall pay EUR 200 for each tonne of PMD waste collected, excluding residues. This sum is to be cut by EUR 20 a year from 2015. The aim is to actively promote the collection of PMD from companies in the first few years by means of a relatively high payment, which will have shrunk to a merely symbolic payment from Fost Plus by the end of the accreditation period. Fost Plus shall also pay EUR 188 per tonne of materials sorted for recycling, to cover the costs of sorting the fraction collected.

The amounts specified in the accreditation take account of the sale value of the materials, i.e. the value accruing to Fost Plus. If this value changes,

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the IRPC can amend the amounts specified in the accreditation at the request of Fost Plus. The latter is required to monitor the costs of collecting PMD from companies.

The payments that apply to the collection of PMD from companies also apply to the collection of PMD in the out-of-home projects organised by Fost Plus. Out-of-home collection refers, for example, to collection at schools, sports centres, youth facilities, festivals, events, public spaces and other areas accessible to the general public, such as train and metro stations and airports.

Article 44 requires Fost Plus to devise a basic programme each year for approval by the IRPC in order to support the collection of PMD and other

packaging materials in the out-of-home projects. The funding provided for this basic programme must have increased by 20% by the end of the accreditation period, as well as being indexed annually.

Article 45 completes this section of the accreditation. Fost Plus is required to annually submit an action plan to the IRPC for approval, covering aspects such as the collection of EPS packaging waste and communication with SMEs on the prevention of packaging waste.

- Articles 47-50 deal with Fost Plus's various reporting obligations towards the IRPC. The IRPC has made these rules much simpler. All reporting obligations are now concentrated around two key dates: 31 March and 15 September.



## 4.2. 2013 REFERENCE COSTS AND 2012 REFERENCE VALUES

The reference costs are the average costs of the tenders awarded for the selective collection of glass, paper/cardboard and PMD, and for the sorting of PMD.

This fixed payment is calculated for the conventional Fost Plus streams (glass, paper/cardboard, PMD collection and PMD sorting), and is the average of the total of the payments for the collection scenarios, which, in accordance with the Fost Plus accreditation, are paid out in the previous year based on the full cost, indexed to the year in which the reference cost has to be applied.

Under the accreditation, the IRPC determines the reference costs each year for the current year. It does this on the basis of the figures that Fost Plus submits to it each year and that it is required to check.

The IRPC determined the reference costs for 2013 as follows:

Reference costs 2013 <sup>1</sup>		Total for collection and sorting				House-to-house and bottle bank collection				Container park collection			
		100% fixed (€/inh.)	100% variable (€/tonne)	60% fixed (€/inh.)	40% variable (€/tonne)	100% fixed (€/inh.)	100% variable (€/tonne)	60% fixed (€/inh.)	40% variable (€/tonne)	100% fixed (€/inh.)	100% variable (€/tonne)	60% fixed (€/inh.)	40% variable (€/tonne)
<b>GLASS</b>	Total	1.6879	53.72	1.0127	21.49	1.4853	56.16	0.8912	22.47	0.2026	41.24	0.1215	16.49
	>200	1.5676	50.83	0.9406	20.33	1.4025	53.09	0.8415	21.24	0.1651	38.00	0.0991	15.20
	<200 inhabitants per km <sup>2</sup>	2.4576	69.70	1.4746	27.88	2.0117	74.58	1.2070	29.83	0.4460	54.05	0.2676	21.62
<b>PAPER/ CARDBOARD</b>	Total	4.1753	59.97	2.5052	23.99	3.4762	66.83	2.0857	26.73	0.6992	40.07	0.4195	16.03
	>200	4.0735	57.95	2.4441	23.18	3.5444	64.66	2.1267	25.86	0.5290	34.63	0.3174	13.85
	<200 inhabitants per km <sup>2</sup>	4.9768	75.04	2.9861	30.02	3.0709	90.74	1.8426	36.30	1.9058	58.86	1.1435	23.54
<b>PMD COLLECTION</b>	Total	3.5286	223.78	2.1171	89.51	3.1862	228.85	1.9117	91.54	0.3424	184.88	0.2054	73.95
	>200	3.3019	216.25	1.9811	86.50	3.1156	224.68	1.8694	89.87	0.1863	130.34	0.1118	52.14
	<200 inhabitants per km <sup>2</sup>	5.3700	280.58	3.2220	112.23	3.9706	268.90	2.3823	107.56	1.3994	309.10	0.8396	123.64
<b>PMD SORTING</b>		2.5351	167.79	1.5210	67.12								

<sup>1</sup> weighted average of 2008 (10%), 2009 (15%), 2010 (20%), 2011 (25%) and 2012 (30%), updated to 2013 prices

The 2012 reference values are the average sale values of the material collected and sorted in 2012.

The IRPC approved the 2012 reference values in mid-2013. These were used as the basis for payments in 2013<sup>6</sup>. An adjustment will be applied in 2014, however, once the IRPC has approved the 2013 reference values.

The 2012 reference values approved by the IRPC are:

<sup>6</sup> The second subparagraph of article 10(1) of the accreditation text contains the following provision on the application of the reference values: "If a tender for the purchase of a particular material is not awarded in accordance with the standard tender specifications drawn up by the 'joint tendering committee' and this deviation has a significant effect on the sale value of the material, the difference shall be received or borne by the municipality or intermunicipality. The average sale value of the materials referred to in the previous subparagraph, the 'reference value', shall then be deducted from the payment for the costs of collection and sorting."

Material (selectively collected and sorted)	Paper/ card- board	Glass	Steel	Alumi- nium	Drink cartons	HDPE	PET blue	PET clear	PET green	PET (average)	Plastics (PET + HDPE)
Average price (EUR/tonne)	92.69	10.28	191.15	617.14	6.50	330.87	459.65	592.79	325.71	542.22	493.64

### 4.3. CHECKING AND MONITORING FOST PLUS

**One of the main tasks of the Interregional Packaging Commission is to check the results achieved by the accredited compliance organisation Fost Plus.** This exercise once again took place in a spirit of consultation and cooperation.

Data in the system was selected at random to ascertain the existence of checked recycling certificates for the waste streams included in the Profost system.

Only the “article 8” streams, named after article 8 of the Fost Plus accreditation, are not currently included in the Profost system.

In the case of these “article 8” streams, checks are carried out in the course of the year, and Fost Plus and the IRPC hold meetings to discuss them. The quality of the data supplied by the intermunicipalities concerned remains good. As regards the streams reported under article 8, 97% were already correct by June 2013. No additional audit was needed for these streams for 2012, as had also been the case for the two previous years. The data collected in previous years, supplemented with a number of simple checks with the competent administrations, demonstrated the recycling of these streams to a sufficient degree of certainty.

A brief summary of the various “article 8” streams is given below:

2012	Plastics*	Metals	Other**	Total
Total quantity accepted (in tonnes)	11,635	1,898	32	13,565

\* The plastics comprise primarily film, plant pots, EPS and mixed plastics

\*\* Only cork

**A monitoring committee was set up to enable the Interregional Packaging Commission to monitor the operation of Fost Plus in a structured manner.** Its members are drawn from Fost Plus and the IRPC’s Permanent Secretariat.

The Fost Plus monitoring committee met five times in 2013, with a very full agenda each time.

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Some of the topics discussed in 2013 were:

- The accreditation application for the period 2014 to 2018, paying particular attention in that context to the financial guarantees that the accredited compliance organisation is required to provide for municipalities and intermunicipalities;
- Updating the packaging/not packaging allocation keys for paper/cardboard;
- The contribution of EUR 0.50 per capita per year to the Belgian regions' policy (article 13(1)(12) of the Cooperation Agreement);
- Renewal of contracts with the intermunicipalities;
- Award of recycling tenders;
- The results of recycling and recovery (for 2012) and checks of these results;
- Collection of PMD from companies and via other non-household channels (out-of-home);
- Collection of EPS;
- Identifying the costs of collection and sorting, and cost drivers;
- Improving the quality of services provided and of the fractions collected;
- Possible expansion of the sorting message regarding plastics;
- The problem of parallel collections of paper/cardboard and PMD;
- The Fost Plus budget for 2014 and the Green Dot tariffs for 2014;
- The various amendments (definite and planned) to Directive 94/62/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on packaging and packaging waste, and the revision of the Cooperation Agreement; in this context, the changes to the Belgian packaging/not packaging list and the grey list (distinction between household and industrial/commercial packaging);
- The national Fost Plus communication campaign;
- The Greener Packaging Award;
- The estimate by Fost Plus of the total household packaging market;
- Structured electronic data transfer from Fost Plus to the IRPC.

Fost Plus's application for renewal of its accreditation was, in particular, the subject of several discussions by the monitoring committee. It even devoted the whole of its November meeting to this topic.



# 5 VAL-I-PAC

## 5.1. TRADING AND RECYCLING OUTSIDE EUROPE

Some of the plastic waste collected in Belgium is resold by European traders and shipped to the Far East for recycling.

The reasons for this are the wage costs—rapidly rising but still relatively low—and the huge demand for raw materials in countries such as India and China. These two factors, together with low transport costs (via container cargo ships) mean that export prices are attractive, especially for cardboard and plastics.

Val-I-Pac conducted another trading study in 2013, as it was required to do under its accreditation. The aim was to investigate the broader context and specific circumstances in which Belgian packaging waste is treated in the Far East. Val-I-Pac organised site visits to China in conjunction with the European and Chinese operators involved. Two IRPC representatives took part in these site visits. The focus was on various qualities of plastic film and the use of the recycled material in local industrial production (for example, shoe soles, plant pots, carrier bags and agricultural film).

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The Chinese government controls the import of all waste streams via a licensing system (AQSIQ export licences for European firms and MEP import licences for Chinese purchasers). Interest in the environment and working conditions is increasing rapidly, as it is for other primary and secondary raw materials. Meetings on these topics were held with government officials from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and with two federations of Chinese plastic recycling companies. The Chinese government is developing a comprehensive accreditation system for recycling businesses as part of the “green fence” programme. This will allow it to control the import of waste and guarantee the quality of the whole recycling chain.

The trading study built on the past experience of Val-I-Pac and on the study carried out by SGS for the IRPC at the end of 2010. This is how the IRPC is working closely with Val-I-Pac to monitor the rapid changes in the Chinese sales market and in Chinese legislation. This action complies with the European requirement to demonstrate that recycling outside Europe takes place under broadly equivalent conditions compared with Europe. Belgium seems to be a real European pioneer in this field, even though it accounts for a very small proportion of total Chinese waste imports.

The trading study did not highlight any problems regarding the various Val-I-Pac waste streams.

## 5.2. THE SME PLAN

Val-I-Pac continued to implement the SME plan in 2013, in accordance with its accreditation. Communication with small unpackers remains a key aspect of Val-I-Pac’s SME plan. The accredited compliance organisation uses various communication channels (brochures, website, press, operators, etc.). Bonuses (container and recycling incentives) are another vital part of Val-I-Pac’s activities in relation to SMEs. A new bonus, the starter incentive, was introduced in 2012 and retained in 2013. This is a EUR 100 bonus paid to unpackers installing a wheeled container for the selective collection of paper/cardboard for the first time.

The Clean Site System project (collection of plastic film at construction sites) and a number of cooperation projects with the container parks of various intermunicipalities are also part of Val-I-Pac’s SME plan.

In addition, Val-I-Pac conducted various studies as part of its SME plan in 2013. Among the most important were a study on the possibility of introducing a specific tariff system for EPS and another on the identification of alternative small containers for the collection of industrial and commercial packaging waste.

## 5.3. EVALUATION OF INCENTIVES FOR UNPACKERS

In 2013 Val-I-Pac was required not only to submit to the IRPC its usual report on the payment of the various incentives but also to conduct a thorough evaluation of the starter incentive.

The starter incentive turned out to have been more successful than initially expected. A total of 2,786 applications were submitted. Almost 80% of the firms receiving the incentive had fewer than ten employees. The data collected in connection with the payment of this incentive showed that unpacking was the sole activity of most of the recipients. The companies benefiting from the incentive were preponderantly based in Flanders (80%). The most strongly represented sectors were hotel and catering, construction and retail. A large proportion of the recipients did not sort any other materials, but 20% did.

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Val-I-Pac's analysis of the payment of the various incentives showed that the total number of certificates approved is continuing to climb. On the financial front, the total amount paid out in the form of container incentives is still rising slightly, while the recycling incentive has fallen. This is mainly because of a reduction in the amount of the plastic recycling incentive, which was made possible under the Val-I-Pac accreditation that came into force in early 2012.

There has been little change in the proportion of the incentives paid to small and medium-sized enterprises in the past four years. The sectors that have received most of the incentives are industry, construction, wholesale trade and retail trade.

The overall financial support given by Val-I-Pac to unpackers to help them cover their costs has not fallen compared with previous years; in fact, it has increased slightly.

## 5.4. CHECKING AND MONITORING VAL-I-PAC

**Checking the results obtained by the accredited compliance organisation Val-I-Pac is a key task of the Interregional Packaging Commission.**

The results submitted by Val-I-Pac in 2013 for the 2012 operating year were checked in the same way as in previous years.

The 2012 operating year was the first year of a new accreditation period.

As in previous years, the IRPC selected a number of operators and closely examined the submissions they had made to Val-I-Pac. Site inspections of some of these operators were also carried out.

**A monitoring committee was set up to enable the Interregional Packaging Commission to monitor the operation of Val-I-Pac in a structured manner.** Its members are drawn from Val-I-Pac and the IRPC's Permanent Secretariat.

The Val-I-Pac monitoring committee met three times in 2013 to discuss a number of topics, including:

- Checking the recycling and recovery results for the 2012 operating year;
- The SME plan and its implementation;
- Direct payment of container and recycling incentives, evaluation of the new starter incentive and introduction of the digital certificate;
- Monitoring the quantity of reusable industrial and commercial packaging in circulation;
- Trends in the value of materials;
- Changes to the Belgian packaging/not packaging list and the grey list (distinction between household and industrial/commercial packaging);
- The estimate by Val-I-Pac of the total industrial and commercial packaging market;
- Structured electronic data transfer from Val-I-Pac to the IRPC.

# 6 RECYCLING AND RECOVERY FIGURES FOR 2012

## 6.1. FOST PLUS RESULTS

The recycling and recovery targets for 2012 for household packaging waste were 80% for recycling and 90% for total recovery (i.e. the sum of recycling and recovery or incineration with energy recovery).

Fost Plus once again exceeded 100% recycling for paper/cardboard, glass and metals in 2012. The explanation for this figure of over 100% is the same as in previous years, i.e. some “industrial and commercial” paper/cardboard was collected together with selectively collected household packaging waste. In the case of glass, parallel imports from abroad go some way towards explaining the results. For metals, the reason is that Fost Plus does not cover the whole of the Belgian market for this material.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The clause in the accreditation text relating to billing metals from the various treatment facilities, which aims to ensure that metal packaging waste that is not selectively collected can be billed more accurately, takes account of the fact that Fost Plus does not cover the whole of the Belgian market. This explains why Fost Plus was able to achieve a metal recycling figure of over 100%.



In its official figures, shown in the table below, the IRPC never accepts more than the quantities reported to the accredited compliance organisation by its members for recycling. The recycling percentage for paper/cardboard, glass and metals is therefore reduced to 100%. The quantities thus rejected are added to the results for total recovery.

	Quantities from members (in tonnes)	Recycling (in tonnes)	Quantities recovered with energy recovery (in tonnes)	Recycling (as %)	Recovery (as %)
Paper/cardboard	165,593	165,593		100.0	
Glass	305,487	305,487		100.0	
Plastics	200,203	75,202		37.6	
Metals	81,052	81,052		100.0	
Drink cartons	19,184	15,988		83.3	
Other	4,230	32		0.8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>775,749</b>	<b>643,354</b>		<b>82.9</b>	
Paper/cardboard from non-members		12,698			
Glass from non-members		26,795			
Metals from non-members		1,673			
Incineration of PMD residues			23,142		
<b>Overall total recovery</b>		<b>684,520</b>	<b>23,142</b>		<b>91.2</b>

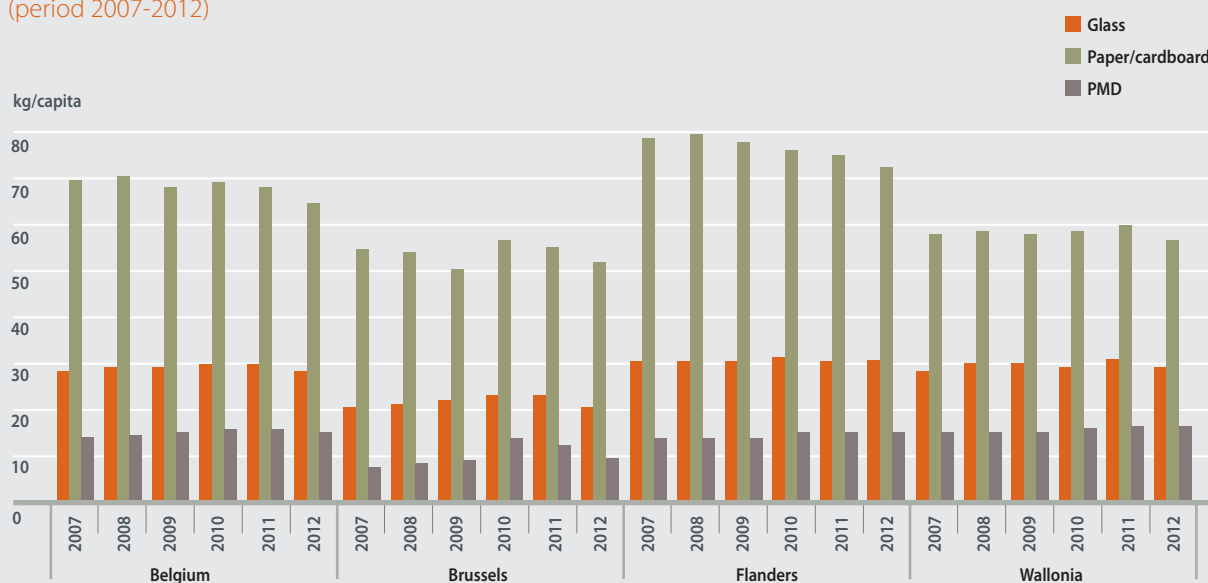
Fost Plus achieved a recycling rate of **82.9%** and a total recovery rate of **91.2%** for the 2012 reporting year.

This was well above the targets laid down in the Cooperation Agreement.

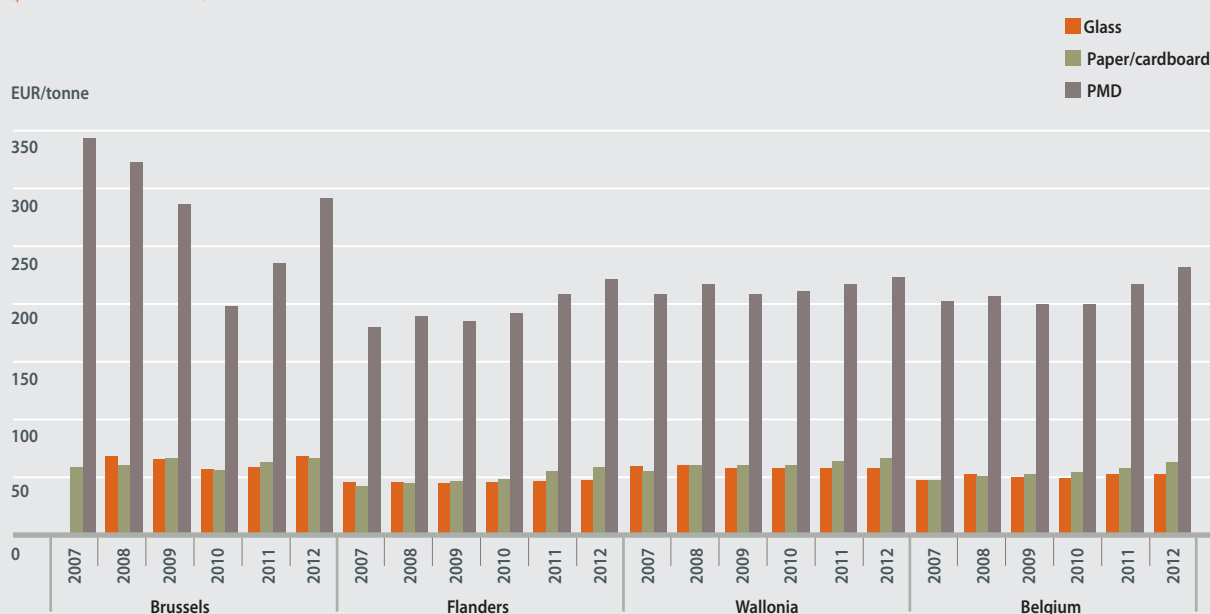
## Intermunicipalities' reporting obligation

Every year the Interregional Packaging Commission examines the information submitted by the intermunicipalities in accordance with article 18(5) of the Cooperation Agreement and compiles statistics on the basis of this information.

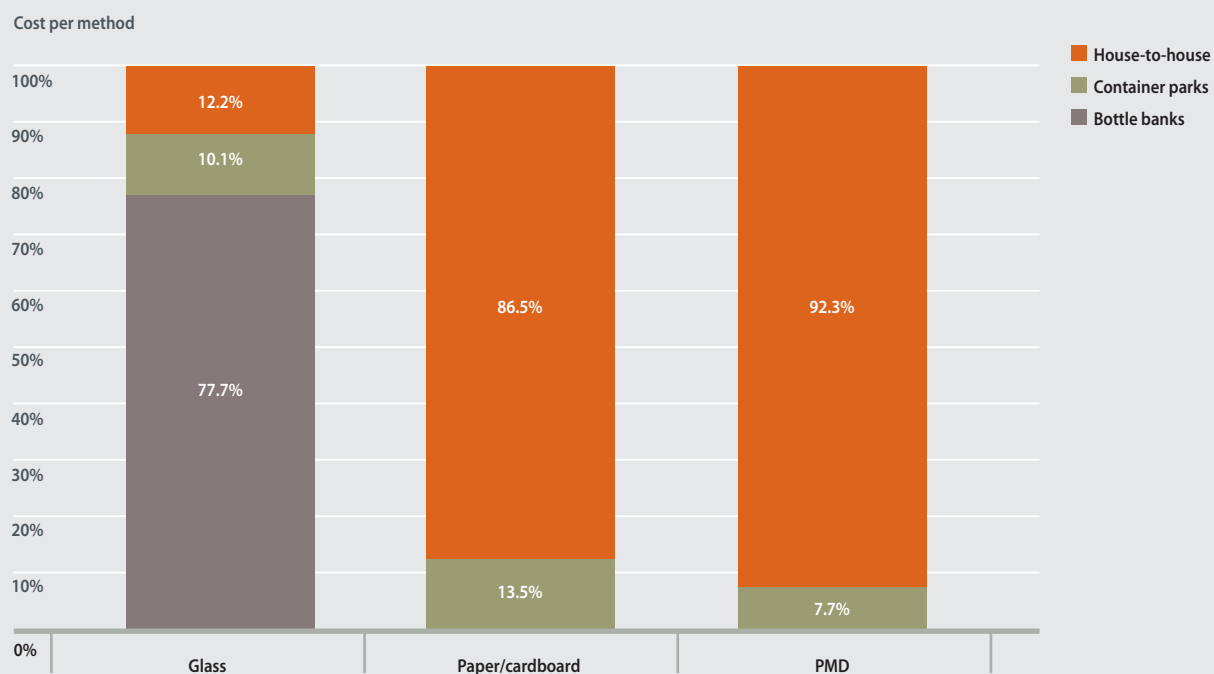
Trend in the collection results per material, per region and for Belgium as a whole, expressed in kg/capita (period 2007-2012)



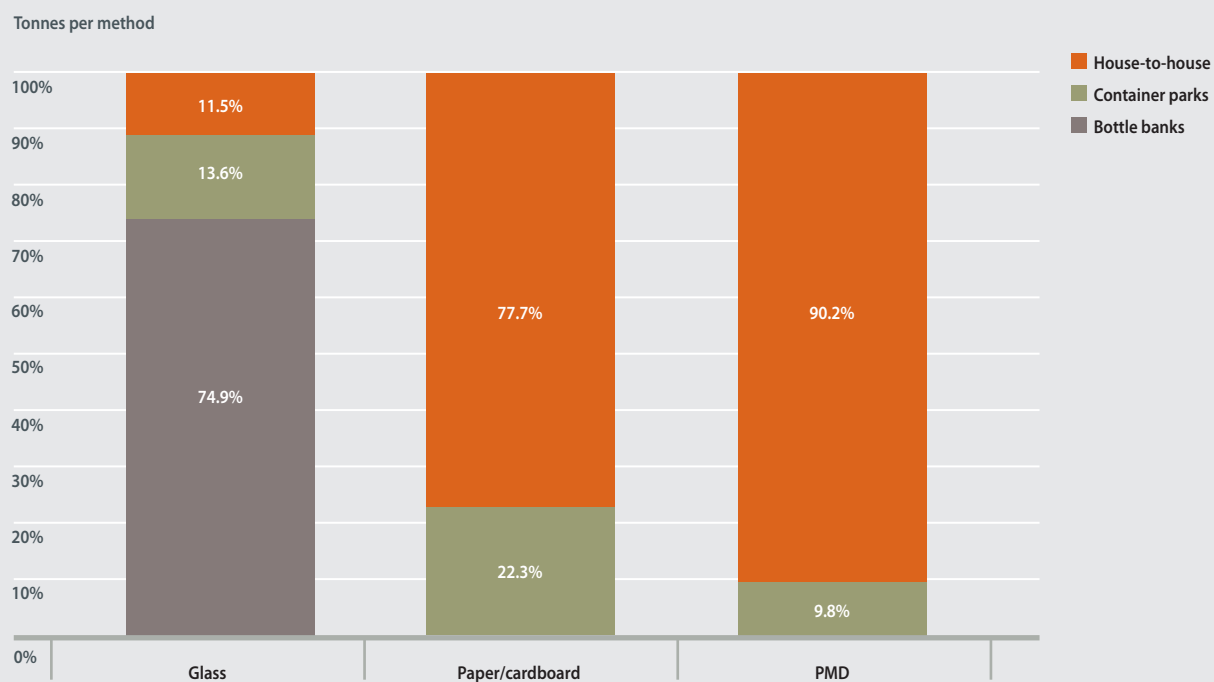
Trend in the average collection cost per material, per region and for Belgium as a whole, expressed in EUR/tonne (period 2007-2012)



Per fraction, proportion of the cost incurred by each collection method (2012)



Per fraction, proportion of the result achieved by each collection method (2012)



## 6.2. VAL-I-PAC RESULTS

The recycling and recovery targets for 2012 for industrial and commercial packaging waste were 80% for recycling and 85% for total recovery (i.e. the sum of recycling and recovery or incineration with energy recovery).

The tables below contain the figures established as the final Val-I-Pac results for the 2012 operating year. The first table shows tonnages, and the second the associated percentages.

	Placed on the market (in tonnes)	Recycling (in tonnes)	Energy recovery (in tonnes)	Total recycling and energy recovery (in tonnes)
Plastic	88,797	49,916	16,095	66,010
Paper/cardboard	386,531	374,046	9,774	383,790
Metal	36,027	29,651	0	29,651
Wood	167,103	110,095	38,152	148,247
Other	7,899	707	0	707
<b>Total</b>	<b>686,357</b>	<b>564,415</b>	<b>63,991</b>	<b>628,406</b>

	Recycling (as %)	Energy recovery (as %)	Total (as %)
Plastic	56.2	18.1	74.3
Paper/cardboard	96.8	2.5	99.3
Metal	82.3	0.0	82.3
Wood	65.9	22.8	88.7
Other	9.0	0.0	9.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>91.6</b>

The “energy recovery” category includes both recovery with energy recovery and incineration with energy recovery.

In 2012 Val-I-Pac achieved a recycling rate of **82.2%** and a total recovery rate of **91.6%**.

This was well above the targets laid down in the Cooperation Agreement.

## 6.3. THE RESULTS OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE COMPANIES

A total of 214 companies stated that they fulfilled the take-back obligation themselves in the 2012 reporting year.

The overall data from responsible companies reporting to the IRPC that they fulfil the take-back obligation themselves, and whose results were accepted by the IRPC, are as follows:

Type of material	Placed on the market (in tonnes)	Recycling (in tonnes)	Energy recovery (in tonnes)
Paper/cardboard	24,391	23,558	111
Plastic	2,649	2,114	160
Metal	1,679	1,636	0
Wood	11,966	11,309	168
Other materials*	858	355	498
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,543</b>	<b>38,972</b>	<b>937</b>

\* including glass

## 6.4. THE OVERALL RESULTS

This section contains the results reported by Belgium to the European Commission (Eurostat) for 2012. The calculation method specified by Europe must take into account the following:

- all one-way packaging placed on the Belgian market, i.e. including quantities placed on the market by free-riders;
- all reusable packaging placed on the Belgian market for the first time;
- the recycling and recovery results for one-way packaging waste, as reported by the accredited compliance organisations Fost Plus and Val-I-Pac and by the responsible companies that fulfil the take-back obligation themselves;
- the recycling and recovery results for reusable packaging withdrawn from the market.

This specific calculation method means that the overall Belgian figures can no longer be compared with the results of the accredited compliance organisations and the individual responsible companies as shown above.

The overall recycling figures for 2012 are given below:

Type of material	Glass	Plastic	Paper/ cardboard (ordinary)	Drink cartons	Total paper/ cardboard	Metal	Wood	Other	TOTAL
Recycling (as %)	100.0	41.5	90.1	81.8	89.8	97.3	66.1	8.4	<b>80.3</b>

## 6.5. MONITORING REUSABLE PACKAGING

Since 2000, the Permanent Secretariat of the Interregional Packaging Commission has been monitoring reusable household packaging statistics submitted to Fost Plus.

Since 2003, the IRPC has also been monitoring reusable industrial and commercial packaging statistics submitted to Val-I-Pac.

We aim to achieve a clearer picture of the trends in reusable packaging by monitoring a specific number of reference companies, i.e. those that report the largest quantities of reusable packaging.

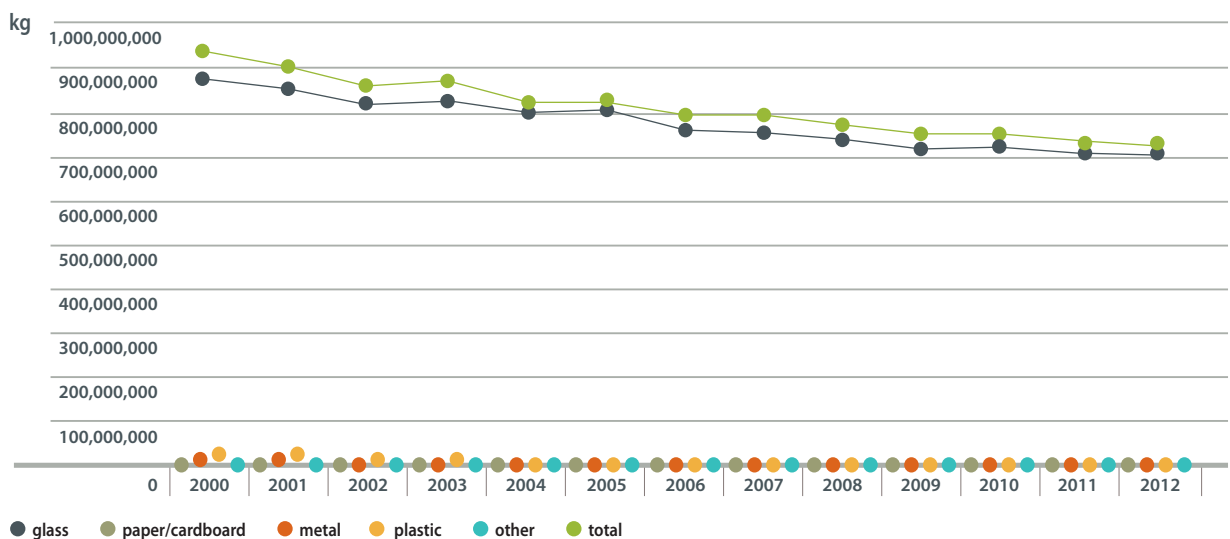
The monitoring process does not include data from responsible companies that place only reusable packaging (i.e. no one-way packaging) on the market. We should therefore point out that this probably leads to re-use figures being slightly underestimated.

Monitoring of reusable packaging in Belgium continued for the 2012 reporting year. The final data for the 2013 reporting year will not be available until September 2014.

### A. Figures for household packaging

The graph below shows the trend in the quantities by weight of reusable household drink packaging, broken down by type of material, and as reported by all Fost Plus members during the period 2000-2012.

Trend in reusable drink packaging, all Fost Plus members



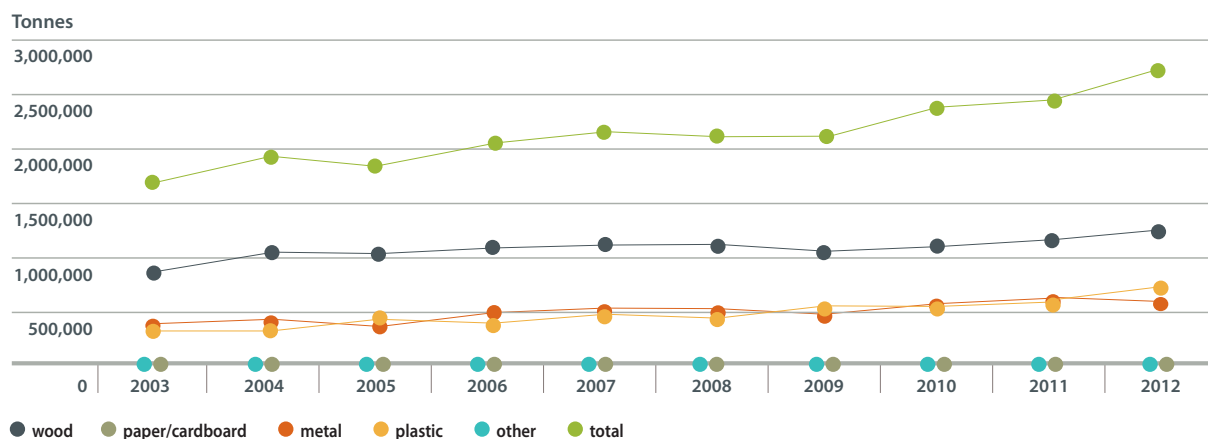
Once again this shows how much reusable drink packaging was made of glass in 2012 (98.3%).

When interpreting these quantities by weight, it should, however, be borne in mind that glass is a relatively heavy material.

## B. Figures for industrial and commercial packaging

The graph below shows the trend in the quantities by weight of reusable industrial and commercial packaging, broken down by type of material, and as reported by all Val-I-Pac members during the period 2003-2012.

### Trend in reusable packaging, all Val-I-Pac members



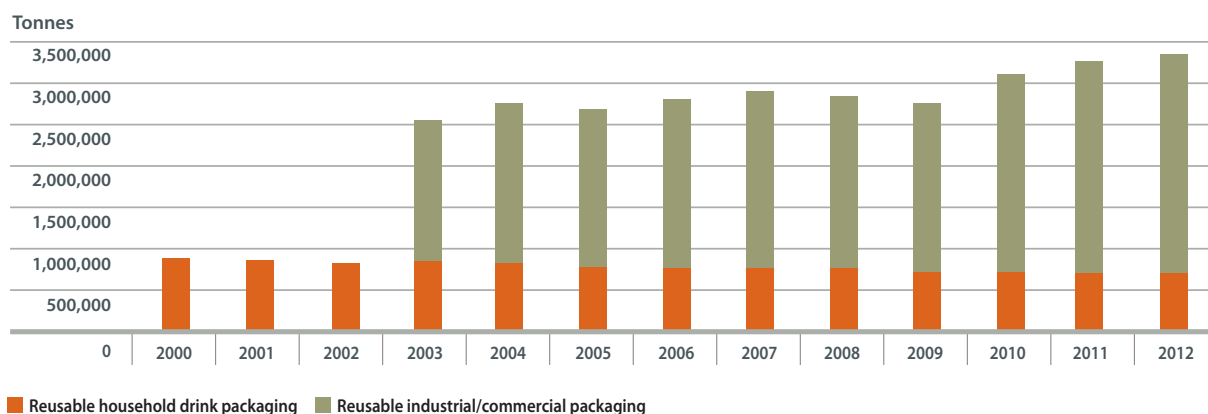
In 2012, 48.1% of the reported quantity of reusable industrial and commercial packaging was made of wood. The only other materials of significance as reusable packaging are plastics (27.2%) and metals (23.6%).

Paper/cardboard and other materials are hardly ever used as reusable industrial and commercial packaging.

## C. Total figures

The graph below gives a total picture of the trend in reusable packaging.

### Trend in total quantities of reusable packaging



Adding up the total quantities of household and industrial/commercial reusable packaging shows that once again there was a net **increase in the tonnage of reusable packaging** (up 117,164 tonnes, or 3.7%) between 2011 and 2012. This increase is entirely due to the success of industrial and commercial reusable packaging.

To put these figures into context, it should be pointed out that:

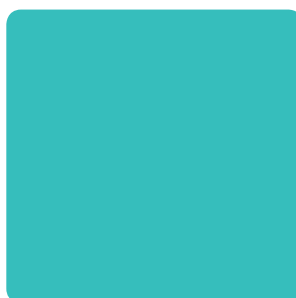
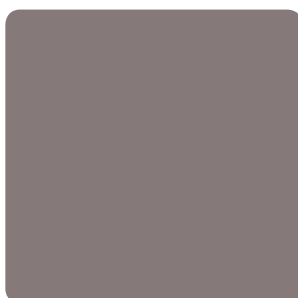
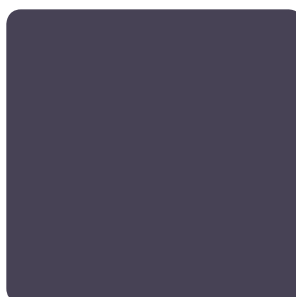
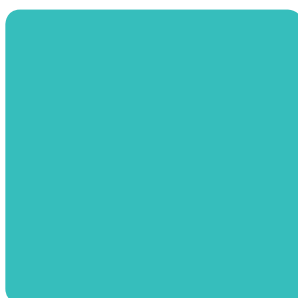
- Fost Plus members placed just 1.6% more one-way packaging on the market in 2012;
- Val-I-Pac members placed just 0.5% more one-way packaging on the market in 2012;
- the Belgian economy shrank by 0.2% in 2012 (after correcting for price fluctuations).



Responsible editor  
Marc Adams, Acting Director

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CDN Communication  
[www.cdncommunication.be](http://www.cdncommunication.be)



Interregionale  
Verpakkingscommissie  
Commission Interrégionale  
de l'Emballage



IRPC  
Avenue des Arts 10-11  
1210 Bruxelles  
T: +32 (0)2 209 03 60  
F: +32 (0)2 209 03 98  
info@ivcie.be  
www.ivcie.be

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