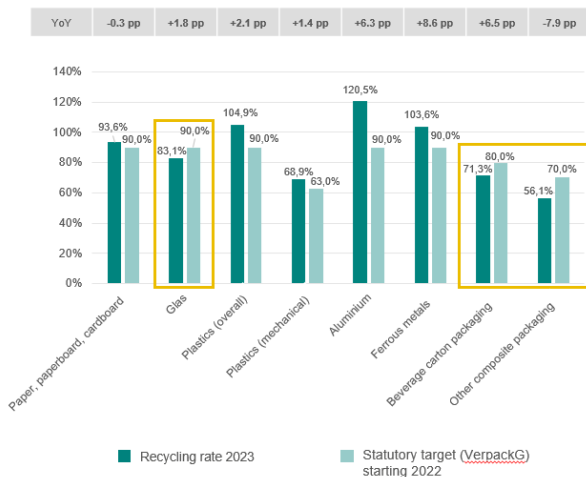


Further information for journalists:

Quota fulfilment overview

Recycling rates 2023*

The systems achieved the following recycling rates in the 2023 reference year:



* Ratio of recovery volumes to participation volumes; transfer for recycling, in the case of plastics: transfer for recovery (including energy recovery) or mechanical recovery
Source: ZSVR; last updated: December 2024

- Recycling increased year-on-year in 2023, except for paper/paperboard/cardboard and other composite packaging.
- Five out of eight statutory recycling quotas were exceeded, with plastics, aluminium and ferrous metal significantly surpassing their targets.
- The rates for glass, other composite packaging and beverage cartons fell short of the statutory quotas.
- Despite this, progress was made in the glass and beverage carton groups, with year-on-year increases in recycling rates. The recycling rate for beverage cartons remained below pre-2022 levels.
- In the composite packaging group, the statutory quota was missed by a wide margin – 13.9 percentage points – and lagged an additional 7.9 percentage points further behind the target compared to the previous year.
- For lightweight packaging, 51.2% of collected volumes were transferred for recovery, exceeding the requirement of 50%.

Shortfall in recovery rates has various causes

There are various reasons for the shortfall in the targeted recovery rates. In the case of glass, a key factor is the ongoing reduction in, or decreased attractiveness or availability of, glass container locations that are easily accessible to consumers. In August 2024, the Advisory Board for Collection, Sorting and Recovery of the Zentrale Stelle Verpackungsregister (Central Agency Packaging Register – ZSVR) published a [recommendation with various measures to increase glass collection volumes](#) (available in German only).

The shortfall in the recovery rates for beverage carton packaging is due to the continued lack of recovery capacities at plants. Even though recycling capacities were enhanced following an initiative of manufacturers and initial distributors of this packaging type, this progress was not enough to ensure that beverage cartons are sufficiently recycled. Further efforts are required here to return to pre-2022 levels and to meet the quota now required by law.

The situation for other composite packaging is especially problematic. Their composition limits recyclability. In addition, recycling capacities for fibre-based composites are scarce in Germany. In particular, industry stakeholders have not made adequate efforts to replace the capacities of a German composites recycling plant lost in the fourth quarter of 2022. Despite the significant increase in waste exports, recycling capacities are far too low overall. The companies distributing their products in this packaging are not really meeting their producer responsibility. Moreover, according to a forecast by the GVM Gesellschaft für Verpackungsmarktforschung, this unfavourable packaging type is still on the rise and projected to increase dramatically.

Notes on the collected data

In accordance with section 16 VerpackG (Packaging Act), the stated quotas relate to packaging that typically accumulates as waste with private final consumers and is collected by the dual systems from private households and comparable sources of waste generation such as restaurants, hotels, hospitals, canteens, schools and many more. This means that the quotas exclusively consider the sub-sector of packaging waste management for which the dual systems are responsible.

They are distinct from the quotas set by the European Packaging Directive 94/62/EC, or in the future, the European Union's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation, which Germany must meet. These quotas also include all other packaging types, such as single-use beverage packaging subject to a deposit, reusable packaging, transport packaging, packaging for hazardous contents or retail and grouped packaging that typically accumulates as waste with industrial or large commercial enterprises. The recycling quotas for national reporting to the EU will be published separately by the German Environment Agency (UBA) at a later date.

Information on calculation and monitoring

The actual recycling rates published by the ZSVR in accordance with section 16 VerpackG are calculated as follows for the individual material types:

“Waste volume transferred for recycling” divided by “the volume participated (licensed) with the dual systems” multiplied by 100

For plastics, there are two separate figures: one for mechanical recycling and another that includes both recycling and energy recovery.

The total recycling rate of lightweight packaging (yellow bins/bags) is calculated as follows:

“Waste volume transferred for recycling” divided by “collected volume of lightweight packaging” multiplied by 100

The recycling rates do not reflect the quantity of recycled materials (output from recycling), but rather the volumes transferred for recycling (usually input at recycling plants). Losses occur in the recycling process, as not all materials can be recovered. The purpose of this calculation point is improved monitoring, primarily through weighing notes that are verified by independent experts and subsequently by the authorities. Thanks to these two stages of independent control, the waste stream managed by the dual systems is one of the most closely monitored waste streams in Germany.