

More than thirty years ago – how time flies! – I was a consultant when two organisations were first established that would go on to play a crucial role in the Belgian packaging sector. First there was Fost Plus, which developed a system for the sustainable processing of household packaging, and shortly afterwards Valipac, which did the same for industrial packaging.

Over the years, I've seen both organisations grow into absolute benchmarks in their field, achieving high recycling rates at limited cost, while ensuring great ease of use for consumers and end users.

Today, both stand at an important turning point. The European Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) marks the start of a new era for our sector. It sets ambitious targets for recycling, reuse, prevention, and the use of recycled content. But above all, it sends a strong message – from government and society alike – that more is expected from the business community. Much more.

Kind regards,

Francis Huysman, Managing Director Fost Plus & Valipac

As CEO of both organisations, I see many opportunities to join forces. Although our operational models differ, we also have a great deal in common. We work on the same themes, face similar challenges, and serve largely the same companies.

It's clear that we can learn from one another and strengthen each other – as two separate organisations, but with one shared goal: helping companies make the transition to circular and future-proof packaging systems.

I would like to sincerely thank all our employees and partners for the great cooperation over the past year. Yes, we are facing major challenges – but these are also exciting times, full of opportunities. I look forward to continuing this journey together in the years to come.



Activity Report 2024

2024

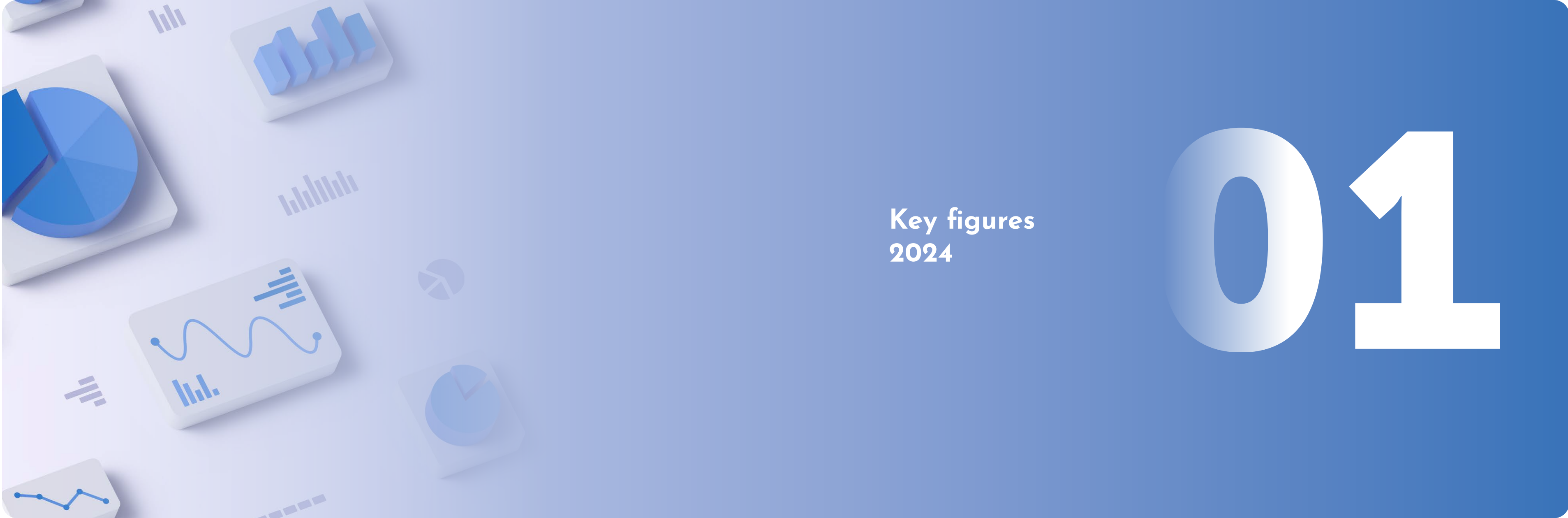


At your service! The packaging industry is facing a lot of challenges in the coming years. New European regulations will have a big impact on our sector. At the same time, we see a lot of opportunities for our clients to optimise their packaging policy and make their packaging more sustainable. You can count on us to help you with that. Because the circular economy is something we achieve together!

The Valipac management team

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Key figures
2024

01



Recycling results 2024

Thanks to cooperation across the value chain, 709,000 tonnes of commercial & industrial packaging were recycled.

We note a slight drop of 0.39 % in the quantities placed on the market compared with 2023.

This downward trend is mainly seen in the construction, steel and metallurgy, as well as paper/cardboard sectors.

Paper/cardboard



107.7 %

461,000 tonnes
recycled

Wood



84.3 %

145,000 tonnes
recycled

Metal



98.3 %

33,000 tonnes
recycled

Plastics



68.7 %

68,000 tonnes
recycled

Trends by material

Paper/cardboard: the increase in the quantities of cardboard put on the market is in line with the increase in the quantities collected and recycled, which explains why the recycling rate is identical to last year.

Wood: the quantities of wood sent for energy recovery continue to rise for the third year running. However, this trend has not (yet) affected the recycling rate, which remains stable.

Plastics: the quantities of plastic put on the market have remained stable, but the recycling rate has increased by 4 %. Half of this increase is due to better selective sorting and the other half to new waste management companies joining the Valipac system. The quantities recycled have been revised downwards by 2,000 tonnes after audits of recycling companies revealed that these quantities were not being processed in accordance with European standards.

Metal: The metal recycling rate has also increased by 4 %. This increase is due to better recording of the quantities of metal waste in commercial & industrial packaging.

The recycling rate for all materials is well above the rates imposed by the European Union and Belgium.

108 % recycling for paper/ cardboard - is that possible?

Valipac achieves an overall recycling rate of over 100% for paper and cardboard. This result may seem surprising, but it is entirely justified. The quantities collected are higher than those declared by our clients. This indicates that many companies that use packaging are not yet members of Valipac and are therefore not complying with the packaging legislation. In 2025, we will significantly step up our prospecting and checks. Fost Plus and Valipac are working together on a new estimate of the total market for household and industrial cardboard packaging. This should enable us to communicate clearer recycling rates in the future, both in terms of market share and total market.



Reliable recycling figures

The quantities of commercial & industrial packaging waste declared by affiliated waste management companies are carefully checked. We ensure that only commercial & industrial packaging waste of Belgian origin is taken into account.

To this end, we carry out annual audits, composition analyses and visual inspections at the waste management companies affiliated to our system. Based on these checks, we determine the percentage and quantity of commercial & industrial packaging waste which can be reported. We also apply flat-rate corrections to exclude moisture and impurities.

Our calculation method complies with European reporting rules and was validated by Eurostat during the Valipac results audit in 2022.

Reusable packaging, a common practice for Belgian companies

Reusable packaging is frequently used by our clients. Alongside single-use packaging, every year our clients also report the reusable packaging in circulation in Belgium on the basis of single-use equivalents, which means that reusable packaging is recorded in each rotation.

Between 2000 and 2024, the ratio of reusable packaging to single-use packaging more than doubled, reaching a factor of 4.76. In terms of volume, 83 % of the commercial & industrial packaging in circulation in Belgium is reusable. If cardboard (which is not really suitable for reuse) is excluded, this percentage rises to 92 %.

Reusable packaging in Belgium
- ratio by material





02

Creating a circular future together

While many European countries do not yet have an operational producer responsibility system for commercial & industrial packaging, Valipac continues to perfect its own system. We are evolving, and have already evolved, towards a circular model that involves and unites all the links in the packaging chain.

The starting point is separate collection at source. We encourage companies to sort their commercial & industrial packaging waste by offering them incentives, thus guaranteeing our clients that recycling rates will be achieved.

Through strategic partnerships, we seek solutions for packaging for which established collection and recycling channels do not yet exist.

Thanks to our traceability system, we can guarantee our clients that their packaging will be sustainably recycled.

Finally, we encourage our clients to use sustainable packaging, thus completing the circle.



A new era of transparency

In 2022, we set up a traceability system for the final destinations of commercial & industrial packaging waste collected from Belgian companies. In collaboration with the independent auditing company SGS, we audit recycling companies around the world to ensure that waste is recycled according to the rules. In this way, we demonstrate that the packaging our clients place on the market is indeed recycled sustainably, even when it is exported outside Europe for the purpose of recycling. Valipac is the first European extended producer responsibility organisation to have set up such a system.

A transparent chain is the best way to guarantee our clients efficient and sustainable recycling of their packaging and to support them in their societal role.'

Nele Vlecken, Senior Account Manager Operations at Valipac

Where is commercial & industrial packaging waste recycled?

Plastics

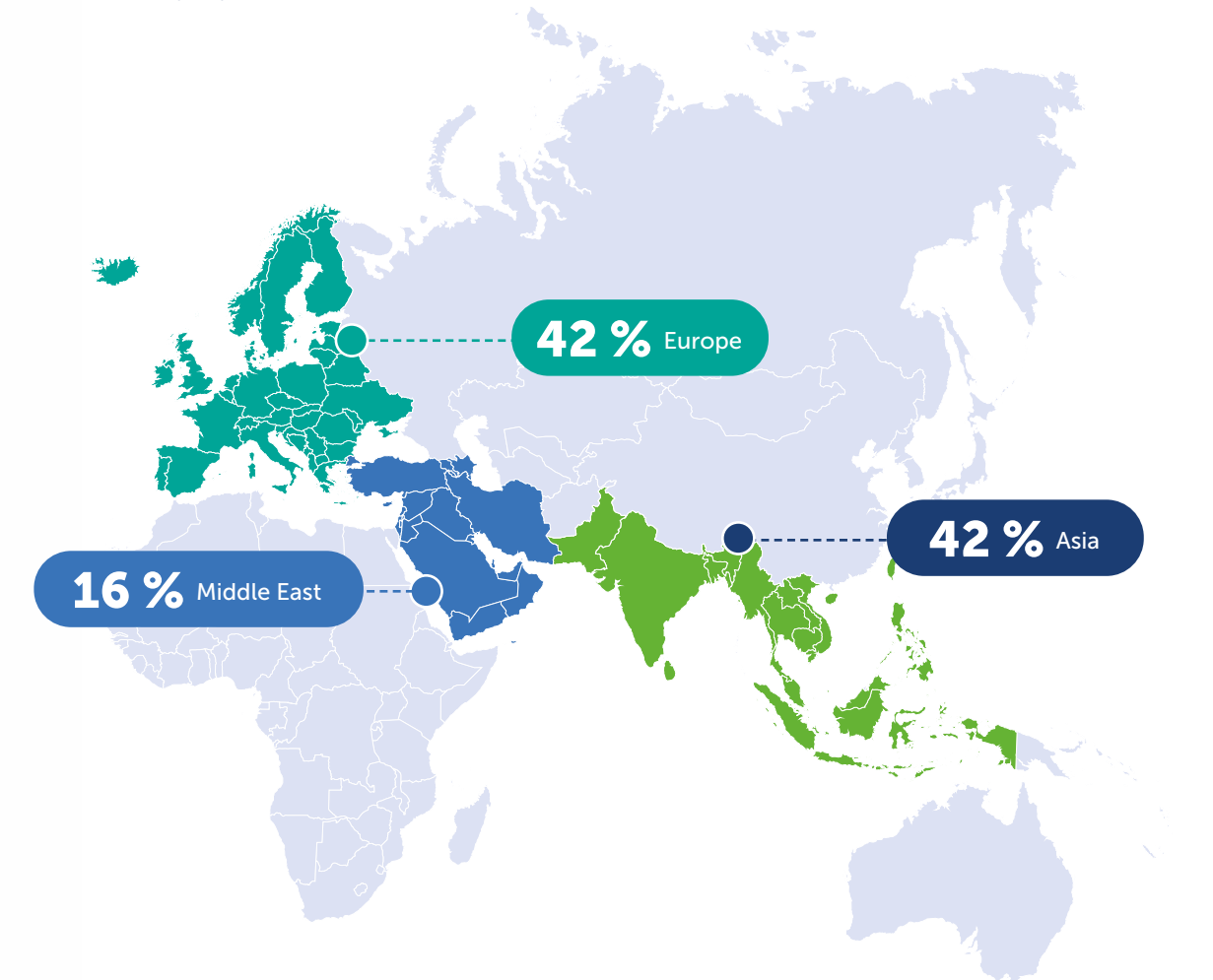
In 2023, 58 % of commercial & industrial plastic packaging waste collected in Belgium was exported to countries outside Europe. The primary destination remains Asia, with 42 % of recycled quantities followed by the Middle East for 16 %.

Why are plastics exported outside Europe?

Plastic exports are mainly driven by the unfavourable economic climate facing European recycling companies. There is a combination of factors. For example, high energy prices as well as high labour costs in Europe make it difficult for them to compete with players outside Europe. They also have to contend with historically low prices for virgin material and cheap imports of recycled material.

Under these circumstances, it is difficult to develop sustainable local recycling markets. This is also the reason why a significant proportion of the plastics collected from Belgian companies is exported to countries outside Europe. This trend continued in 2024.

Recycling destinations for commercial & industrial plastic packaging waste.





Audits of 122 recyclers around the world

Since 2022, we have carried out audits of 122 recycling companies. They represent 82% of the quantities of commercial & industrial plastic packaging waste from Belgium processed in the Middle East and 96 % of the quantities processed in Asia.

Destination	Area	Quantities exported	Number of audits	Number of non-compliant recyclers
Türkiye	OECD	14,484 tonnes	62	5
Vietnam	Non OECD	10,936 tonnes	12	1
Indonesia	Non OECD	8,595 tonnes	24	1
Malaysia	Non OECD	4,546 tonnes	20	2
India	Non OECD	204 tonnes	6	—
Taiwan	Non OECD	150 tonnes	1	—
Pakistan	Non OECD	7 tonnes	1	1

We have identified ten companies that do not comply with European environmental, health and safety standards. Packaging waste exported to these companies is being deducted from our recycling figures, and we are urging our partners to cease collaboration with these companies immediately. Clients of the waste management companies concerned will also no longer receive financial incentives for packaging waste shipped to these companies.

Two of the non-compliant companies have begun a remediation process. After being audited again, this time unannounced, these companies were able to demonstrate that they now meet the expected requirements. We can therefore reintegrate them into our ecosystem.

What about other materials?

Unlike plastics, commercial & industrial packaging waste made from paper/cardboard, wood and metal is mainly recycled in Europe. About 15 % of paper/cardboard is processed in Asia, 18 % of metal in the Middle East, while wood is entirely recycled in Europe.

In 2025, we are planning to audit some thirty paper/cardboard recyclers outside Europe.

Together, we have more impact

Organising audits at recycling companies all over the world is an energy-intensive activity. That's why we join forces with organisations in other countries that face the same challenge and often approach the same companies.

In 2023, for example, we signed a cooperation agreement with our Dutch colleagues at Verpact to share our audit reports. In 2024, we expanded our cooperation with Icelandic Recycling Fund (Iceland), Valorlux (Luxembourg) and Repak (Ireland). We also developed a standardised audit protocol for uniform assessment of recycling companies.

In this way, we have a stronger position vis-à-vis the recyclers we wish to audit, we gain a European perspective and we can share the costs over several organisations.



New recycling flows thanks to cooperation in the chain

The vast majority of commercial & industrial packaging consists of a single material and can be recycled relatively easily. However, some streams still do not have collection and recycling systems. Although Valipac is meeting its legal recycling targets, we want to prevent these materials from ending their lives in incinerators. That is why we are setting up pilot projects in collaboration with the industry. In 2024, we developed two projects in the construction sector.

Valipac demonstrates that it is possible to find a sustainable solution even for streams that are more difficult to recycle. The key lies in intelligent cooperation between producers, distributors, end-users and specialist recycling companies.'

Wout Mertens, Account Manager Operations at Valipac

Towards greater circularity in the construction sector

Spray cans for polyurethane foam

Spray cans for polyurethane foam are increasingly being used on building sites and, because of their ease of use, gradually replacing mortar. Due to their composition, their hazardous nature and the fact that they are not completely empty, few companies are currently in a position to recycle these spray cans.

The PUre pilot scheme now enables contractors to use collection bags and drop off their polyurethane foam spray cans free of charge at builders' merchants. The project began in 2022 in the province of Antwerp and quickly spread to East Flanders and Hainaut. Since the start of the project, more than 22,000 spray cans, or around 5 tonnes, have been collected from participating builders' merchants. In view of this success, we plan to extend this collection system throughout Belgium.

PUre is the result of collaboration with Soudal and Wienerberger. Our partner Vanheede Environmental Services collects the bags from participating merchants and forwards them to the German company

PDR for recycling. After crushing, separation and washing, all the materials are recycled: plastic, ferrous and non-ferrous metal fractions, but also gases and polyurethane residues. The latter are reused, for example, in the production of adhesives.

Plastic paint pots

Plastic paint pots are, in themselves, perfectly recyclable. However, they generally still contain paint residue and most recyclers only accept empty paint pots. Valipac therefore set out to find a solution. Thanks to a pilot project in the province of Antwerp, since 2024 painters have been able to return their used paint pots to the paint shops of Boss Paints, Akzo Nobel and PPG. The pots no longer end up in residual waste and are no longer abandoned by painters at their customers' premises.

The pots are sent to the specialised Dutch recycling company FIRE-OFF. The main challenge is to separate the paint and plastic to avoid any contamination of the recycled plastics. They are rinsed, shredded and washed. The plastic granules are then shipped to the packaging manufacturer Dykstra, which uses them to produce new pots.





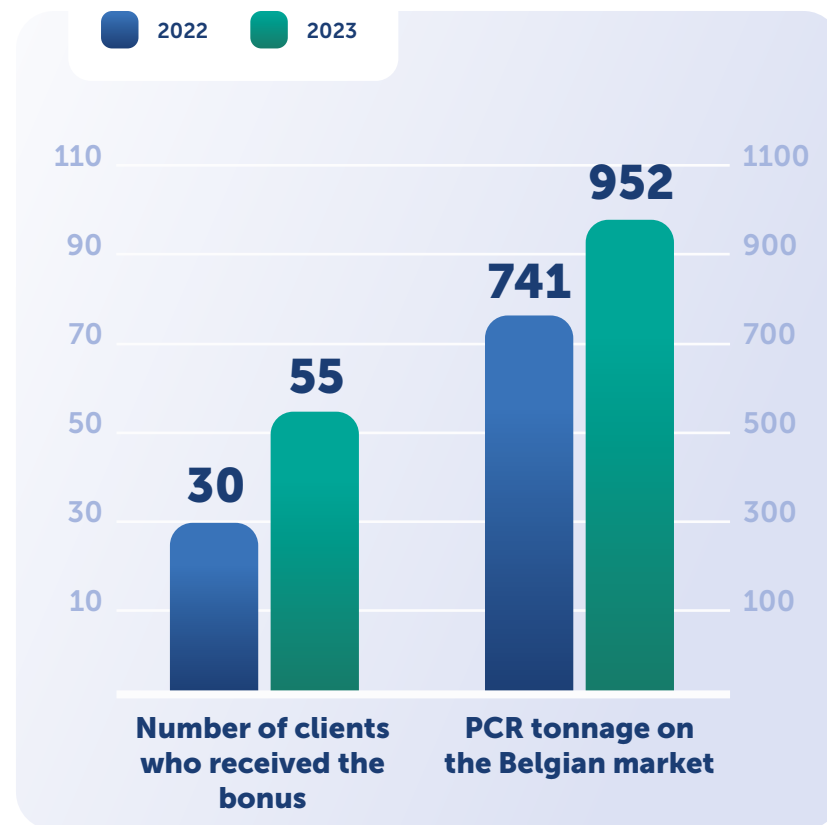
A boost for the use of recycled content

Separate collection and sustainable recycling of commercial & industrial packaging are only one aspect of the material loop. To complete this loop, we also need to make effective use of these recycled materials in new packaging. A difficult initiative to implement in the current economic climate.

Double bonus for recycled content from 2025

Since 2022, we have been offering our clients who use recycled plastic in their commercial & industrial packaging a bonus of € 50 per tonne of post-consumer recycled content. This packaging must contain a minimum of 30 % post-consumer recycled content.

The use of recycled content in Europe is struggling to get started. In the current climate, virgin plastic is significantly cheaper than recycled material. The percentage of recycled content in our clients' packaging has plateaued at 1 or 2 %. To close the price gap and accelerate the transition, we have doubled the bonus from 2025. It now amounts to € 100/tonne.



myRecycledContent - our platform is expanding

To qualify for the recycled content bonus, our clients must use packaging producers listed on our **myRecycledContent.be** platform. Only packaging with a certified rate of recycled content is accepted on the platform. Producers are selected by our team, who also verify certification.



In 2024, we added 13 new suppliers to the platform. Today, 49 suppliers together offer more than 400 types of packaging containing at least 30 % post-consumer recycled materials. Thanks to our collaboration with France (Twice), Germany (RIGK) and the United Kingdom (Recoup), myRecycledContent is now available in four European countries.

Our Chaudfontaine site has always been a pioneer in the field of sustainable development. After using recycled materials in plastic bottles and their collective packaging, we now also use recycled plastics in our pallet wrapping films. We have already reached 30 % recycled content and we hope to increase this figure even further in the coming years.'

Kristel Rouma, Senior Manager Sustainability at Coca-Cola Europacific Partners Belgium BV





Legislative watch

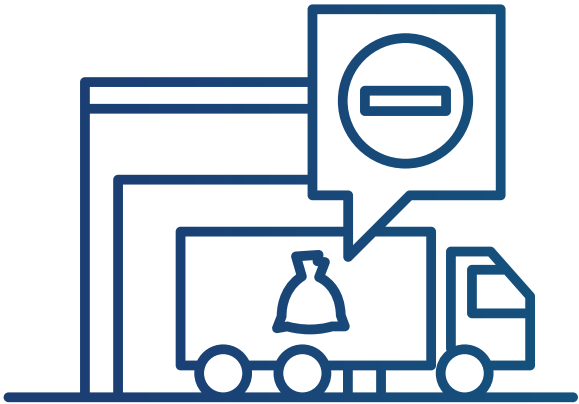
The legal framework for our industry is set to change radically over the coming years. Our team is keeping a close eye on these developments in order to inform our clients and prepare them for the future. In 2024, our attention was mainly focused at the European level. This was the year in which the Waste Shipment Regulation and the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation were finalised.

Waste Shipment Regulation

RESTRICTIONS ON EXPORTS AND SHIPMENTS OF WASTE

The *Waste Shipment Regulation (WSR)* came into force on 20 May 2024. This regulation aims to ensure that waste originating from Europe is treated in an environmentally sound manner. It also strengthens traceability requirements and the fight against illegal waste shipments. Thanks to our traceability system and the many audits we already carry out today with recycling companies outside Europe, we are well ahead of the game.

What does this regulation say? →



Non-OECD countries: general export ban

For the export of non-hazardous plastics, a notification requirement will apply from 21 May 2026 and an export ban from 21 November 2026. For all other (non-hazardous) materials, exports will be banned from 21 May 2027.

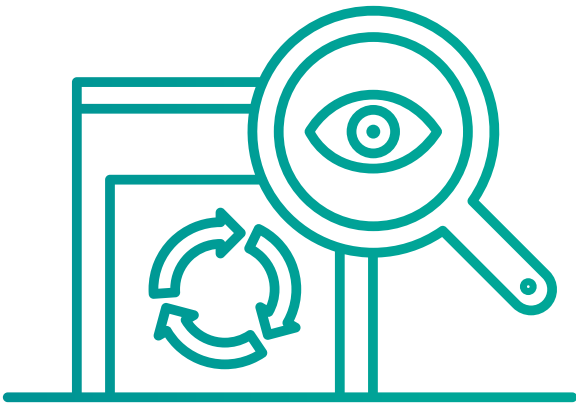
However, the countries concerned may apply to the European Commission for a derogation. To do so, they must demonstrate their ability to treat the waste in an environmentally sound manner.



OECD member countries: export monitoring

Since 20 May 2024, the Commission has been monitoring the export of all types of waste to OECD member countries, including the Republic of Türkiye. It may prohibit exports if there is insufficient evidence that the waste will be treated in an environmentally sound manner.

Plastic exports will be closely monitored. From 21 May 2026, recycling companies will have to apply a prior written notification procedure for the export of non-hazardous plastic waste.



Mandatory audits for recycling companies outside Europe

From 21 May 2027, all recycling plants located outside the European Union must undergo a pre-export audit. OECD countries may be granted an exemption if there is a bilateral agreement between the country in question and the European Union.



Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation

AMBITIOUS TARGETS FOR SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

The *Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)* was finally approved at the end of 2024 and will come into force on 12 August 2026. Its ambitious targets for packaging recyclability, recycled content, reuse and prevention will have a considerable impact on our entire value chain.

What does this mean for our clients?



From 2030, **commercial & industrial plastic packaging** will have to contain at least **35 %** certified post-consumer recycled material.



Transport and sales packaging used for **transport within a Member State** must be **100 %** reusable.



Transport and sales packaging used for **transport between the Member States** of the European Union must be **40 %** reusable.

The new requirements of this Regulation will have a clear impact on the level of detail of the quantities placed on the market. Contributions of our clients will also have to reflect this level of detail and be further differentiated according to the type of packaging.

The various obligations are to be specified in secondary legislation over the next few

years. It is therefore difficult to provide definitive information on a number of topics today. Nevertheless, we are already working hard to inform our clients and prepare ourselves as well as possible. For example, in May 2024 we organised a webinar in which 360 clients took part. In 2024, we gave numerous presentations across the country.

2030 still seems a long way off, but the deadline is fast approaching. We encourage our clients to take the lead and act today. We are ready to help them.'

Ingrid Bouchez,
Communication Manager at Valipac



Our organisation

04



A look behind the scenes

OUR EMPLOYEES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

As a major player in packaging sustainability, we are proud of our essential role in the development of a circular economy. We believe in the power of innovation and collaboration to meet the complex challenges of packaging waste management. But above all, it is our employees who make the difference. The talent and expertise of each and every one of them plays a crucial role in achieving our mission.

Valipac cares about its employees. Well-being and personal development are at the heart of the workplace. But there is also time for relaxation, with a game of table football or after-work parties.'

Jana Vanderschommen, Account Manager Customer Service at Valipac



Well-being at work

The well-being of our employees is a priority within our organisation. Twice a year, we organise a survey in which we ask employees about their motivation, their involvement in the organisation, stress-related complaints or risks of professional burnout. We also ask them about specific factors in their professional situation which may have an impact on their work.

Investing in training and personal development

To improve well-being, we have organised awareness campaigns on the importance of good sleep, healthy eating and mindfulness. We have also set up feedback systems to make the results more visible.

In addition to the training courses that we organise ourselves, we encourage our employees to pursue their personal development. To this end, they receive their own training budget. In 2024, our employees attended an average of 4.3 days of training.

Lastly, we also encourage collaboration between departments and regularly organise training sessions where knowledge about a specific subject is shared.

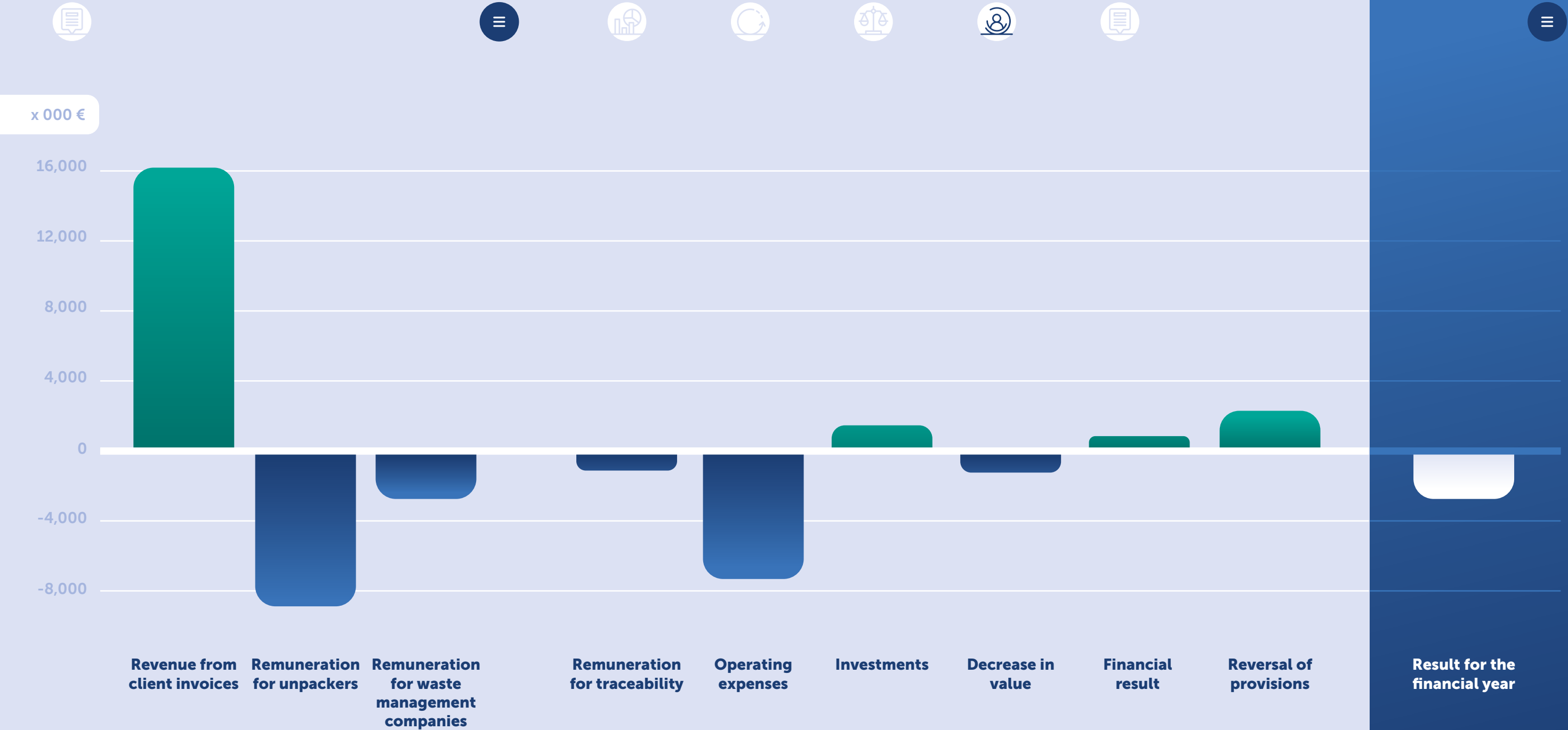
Financial results

We ended 2024 with a negative balance of 2,600,000 euros. This result was anticipated at the time of drawing up the budget and was initially estimated at a loss of 4,515,000 euros. For the second year running, the tonnage of commercial & industrial packaging placed on the market continues to fall, resulting in a loss of sales.

The expenditure planned for incentives to be paid in 2025 to unpackers for the reference year 2024 has been estimated at a level significantly lower than initially budgeted.

Investment gains amount to 628,000 euros. Given the unpredictability of the financial markets, no gains were taken into account when drawing up the budget.

Due to the expected reduction in expenditure on incentives, the more favourable financial results made it possible to limit the loss, despite the decline in turnover.





Moving forward together

Dear reader,

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2024 activity report. That leaves us with the conclusion, which I am delighted to present to you.

We can be proud of our achievements in 2024. The **Valipac team** has reached new milestones on all fronts: reliable and excellent recycling figures, increased transparency on the destinations of collected packaging, numerous pilot projects on new recycling streams, and much more.

What strikes me most is that Valipac employees do not shy away from challenges and continue to move forward together, caring for one another. We work closely with our clients, as well as with our waste and material collection and recycling partners. Digital interaction will gradually bear fruit in the form of a smart and robust IT architecture that has been completely re-designed. But the many personal interactions between Valipac employees, clients and partners are just as important.

In 2024, we also expanded our cooperation with other **Extended Producer Responsibility organisations** in Europe, particularly for audits of recycling companies. We have shared audit reports and developed a standardised audit protocol. **European cooperation** is essential and ongoing within professional organisations such as EPRO and EXPRA, to prepare us for the legal requirements of the new Waste Shipment Regulation (WSR) and the new Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR).

Cooperation between the two Extended Producer Responsibility organisations recognised in Belgium, **Fost Plus** for household packaging and **Valipac** for commercial & industrial packaging, was also strengthened in 2024. Since September 2024, Francis Huysman has been Managing Director of Fost Plus in addition to Valipac. This shared role allows both organisations to fully leverage their strengths. While maintaining their independence, they can create synergies and promote the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

Our main mission remains to comply with the requirements of our accreditation as a reliable partner of the Interregional Packaging Commission (IRPC). Together with the Commission, we are taking up the challenge – with a focus on equal opportunities and competitiveness – to maintain Belgium’s top performance in collection and recycling. At the same time, we are preparing for changes in the European legal context, while respecting the valuable ecosystem that has developed around Valipac over the past 25 years.

Finally, I would like to thank all employees, partners and authorities for their cooperation and intensive and successful interactions in 2024. The challenges are significant, but together we can meet them.

Lieven Stalmans, Chairman of Valipac



[More information ↗](#)

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