

More and better recycling

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Even if you design, produce and consume according to circular principles, waste will still appear. It is the Danish Government's target to ensure more and better recycling.

In 2019, citizens and companies in Denmark generated approx. 12.7 million tonnes of waste. This includes waste from food, packaging, textiles and electronics and various other types of waste. 44 percent of waste was recycled, 29 percent was incinerated, while 24 percent was used for other forms of recovery and 3 percent was sent to landfill. When the generation of waste cannot be avoided, it should be treated in a way that minimises the environmental impact.

A secondary raw material is of high quality when it can replace virgin raw materials without creating undesired environmental effects or impairing the function and value of the final product. Secondary raw materials in low quality can originate from composite materials that cannot be separated easily. In addition, some waste may be unsuitable for recycling due to harmful chemicals. Recycling such types of waste can be harmful for the environment and human health. A change in design practices, increased traceability and better waste sorting are ways to ensure secondary raw materials of high-quality and without harmful chemicals.

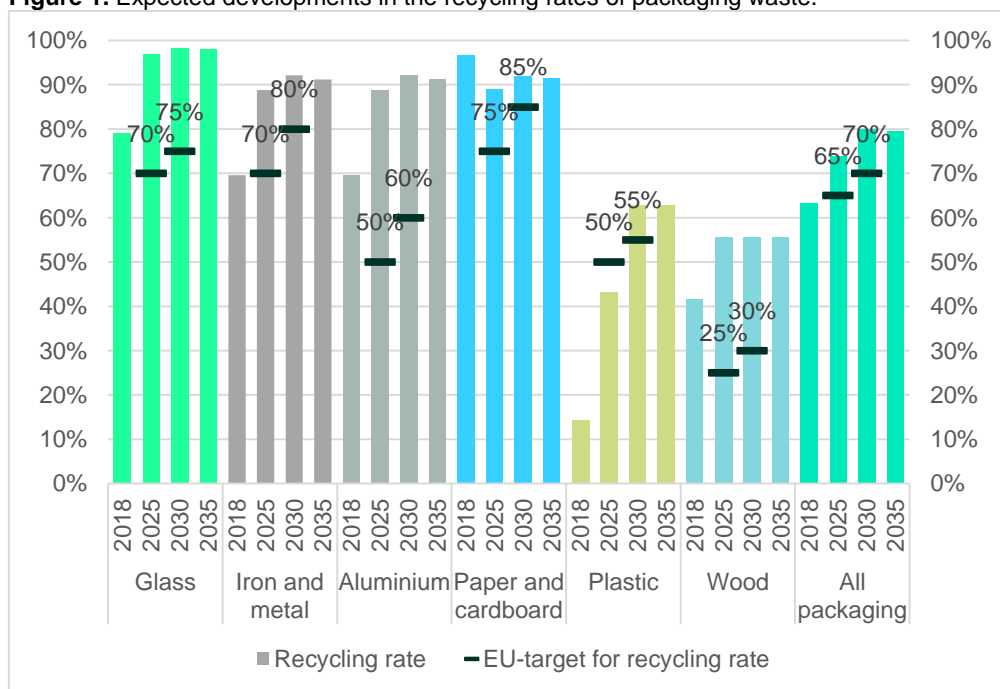
To ensure more and better recycling, the Danish Government will:

- Streamline sorting and collection of municipal waste
- Introduce a strengthened and risk-based audit of businesses' waste practices.
- Set requirements regarding tender of treatment of recyclable waste
- Reduce incineration capacity by 30 percent from 2020 to 2030
- Introduce extended producer responsibility for packaging
- Modernise the extended producer responsibility for electronics

Facts about Denmark's waste management

- Approx. 44 percent of municipal waste was recycled in 2019. EU targets have been set to increase this rate to at least 55 percent in 2025, 60 percent in 2030 and 65 percent in 2035 in all member states.
- Approx. 63 percent of the packaging waste from households and businesses was recycled in 2018. EU targets have been set to increase this rate to 65 percent in 2025 and 70 percent in 2030 in all member states.
- Denmark generated approx. 12.7 million tonnes of waste (excluding soil) in 2019. Of this, 28 percent originated from households, 40 percent originated from construction and demolition, and 32 percent came from other industries.
- As a share of total waste generated, 44 percent was recycled, 29 percent was incinerated, while 24 percent was used for other forms of recovery and 3 percent was sent to landfill.
- In 2019, waste treatment accounted for approx. 4.9 percent of the total CO₂e emissions in Denmark. The majority of this came from waste incineration.
- There is an overcapacity of approx. 700,000 tonnes at the Danish incineration plants today compared with the amount of waste suitable for incineration generated in Denmark.

Figure 1. Expected developments in the recycling rates of packaging waste.



Source: Eurostat, Danish Environmental Protection Agency.