



Packaging recyclability certifications

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Fibre-based packaging champions recyclability with recycling rates above other packaging materials. The recyclability of packaging depends in practice on its actual ability to be collected, sorted and reprocessed into secondary materials within a market. On that respect, there are different rules and technical criteria that can be applied when assessing the recyclability of a packaging

The Packaging & Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) will, by 2030, require all packaging placed on the European market to be recyclable; but ahead of this date there is a growing expectation from consumers, brands and retailers that the packaging they use is fully recyclable...indeed some have established more ambitious timelines for their packaging being recyclable in advance of the PPWR.

The move to fully recyclable packaging is leading to an exponential growth in requests to paper producers, converters and brand-owners to validate the recyclability of their packaging as well as of certification institutes that are offering recyclability assessments of packaging – in some cases consumer brands and retailers have aligned with a selected scheme/ laboratory.

We are expecting the final vote on the PPWR in Q4 of 2024 and that the application of the Regulation commences in Q3 of 2026 – there are a number of delegated acts / secondary legislation which will need to be agreed during the rollout of the PPWR including the design for recycling criteria and recycling performance grades as well as the methodology for the recycled at scale assessment.

In the interim, if your company is asked to submit assessments concerning the recyclability of your packaging, we would recommend you work with a laboratory that tests to the following current ‘best-in-class’ test methodology.

In an effort of harmonisation across the different existing assessment for fibre-based packaging recyclability, the CEPI Laboratory Recyclability Test Method¹ was established in 2021 and considers the most relevant recycling phases of a typical paper mill dedicated to the recycling of the most common grades of paper & board and was used by the

¹ <https://www.cepi.org/cepi-recyclability-test-method-version-2/>

4evergreen Alliance² as the basis for developing the protocol for evaluating the recyclability of fibre based packaging in standard recycling mills³ – in Q4 of 2024, the 4evergreen Alliance recyclability evaluation protocol will be extended to include deinking mills and specialized recycling mills that recycle more complex packaging.

We would recommend, when contacting a laboratory to assess your packaging for recyclability, that you ensure they test your packaging according to the CEPI Recyclability Test Methodology - the CEPI website lists laboratories⁴ that use the test method although this list is not exhaustive.

² <https://4evergreenforum.eu>

³ <https://4evergreenforum.eu/about/guidelinesandprotocol/>

⁴ <https://www.cepi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/REC-23-039.pdf>