

Press release

Press release: Cepi publishes update to its European recyclability laboratory test method, tapping the knowledge of 4evergreen alliance and testing labs

Brussels, 03 March 2025

Cepi has published today an update to its European recyclability test method, a cornerstone of the pulp and paper industry commitment to circularity. It was developed in collaboration with the 4evergreen alliance and actors from the entire paper value chain, including specialised testing laboratories.

Paper packaging solutions already reach high recycling rates, 83.2% according to Eurostat, but are also increasingly fulfilling new functionalities. Cepi's objective is to enable developers to verify that new types of paper packaging are compatible with conventional recycling mills, while responding to the ever-evolving needs of their consumers. This is **an essential consideration also for brand owners aiming to reach ever higher performance in terms of circularity and sustainability for their products.**

Design guidelines and evaluation protocols are developed to support value chain actors in these efforts, with the **goal to reach a recycling rate for paper packaging of 90% by 2030**. Typically, a testing method allows to emulate in laboratory conditions the processes taking place in paper recycling mills. The updated harmonised recyclability test method offers a solid basis for this work and allows paper products across Europe to be tested for their recyclability in identical conditions. The Cepi test method, first published in 2021, harmonises the various methods pioneered by national paper institutes and allows now much larger number of laboratories in Europe to test fibre-based packaging and other paper and board articles for recyclability.

Essential to the project was the collaboration with 4evergreen, an alliance hosted by Cepi with more than 380 experts from across the value chain collaborating to develop expert knowledge and science-based guidelines and recommendations for fibre-based packaging. Over the past two years, these experts have carried out a significant number of tests that informed the improvements of the method. In addition, new annexes were **developed through intensive work provided by the value chain involved in 4evergreen. This allowed for a 'reality check' of the method** and informed the efforts of the testing institutes participating in the project, resulting in a very robust test method that can now be reliably applied all over Europe.

As a companion document to the Cepi test method, **4evergreen has recently released a 'recyclability evaluation protocol'**, which will provide packaging developers with assessment criteria to interpret the results obtained with the recyclability testing method. This will further support the industry in producing fibre-based packaging and other articles compatible with a low-carbon, climate-neutral society and ensuring high degree of fibrous material being recycled back to paper products.

Download the [Paper and Board Recyclability Laboratory Test Method – Part I – Recycling mill with Conventional process](#).

Download the [other parts of the Fibre-based packaging recyclability evaluation protocol](#).

Quote by Jori Ringman, Cepi Director General

"In a time where circularity is coming back to the forefront of EU policy, it is important to recall that the entire sector has never wavered from its objective to make our packaging as circular as possible. This remains a key competitiveness factor for the fibre-based packaging value chain."

"This work is important now that many novel applications are introduced to the market, often replacing less circular materials, and at a time when Europeans increasingly turns towards low carbon, circular and renewable production and consumption."

Notes to editor:

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For more information on Industry commitments,
please consult:

[Cepi's Sustainable Product Pledge](#)

[Cepi's Pledge to support the 3 billion trees initiative](#)

[The 4evergreen cross-industry alliance](#)

About Cepi:

Cepi is the European association representing the paper industry. We offer a wide range of renewable and recyclable wood-based fibre solutions to EU citizens: from packaging to textile, hygiene and tissue products, printing and graphic papers as well as specialty papers, but also bio-chemicals for food and pharmaceuticals, bio-composites and bioenergy.

We are a responsible industry: 91% of our raw materials are sourced in Europe and certified as sustainable, 92% of the water we use is returned in good condition to the environment. . We are the world champion in recycling at the rate of 79.3%. At the forefront of the decarbonisation and industrial transformation of our economy, we embrace digitalisation and bring 20 billion value addition to the European economy and €5.5 billion investments annually. Through its 19 national associations, Cepi gathers 480 companies operating 856 mills across Europe and directly employing more than 175,000 people.

More information about our sustainability performance [here](#).