

CONTRIBUTIONS TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

CASE STUDY
RECYCLING #1

INNOVATIVE COLLECTION INITIATIVE IN BELGIUM

- Recycling rates in Belgium are above the European average but the industry is always looking for ways to improve on this.
- To reduce logistics costs for collection, the industry is putting a new collection opportunity to trial which could potentially be implemented at 20,000 businesses in Belgium.
- Tests with woven collection bags and a communication package for businesses have proved successful so that a pilot with 70 companies has been launched.



DESCRIPTION

Large volumes of EPS are already collected and recycled in Belgium but how can the industry help to collect the smaller EPS refuse across the country? About 20,000 companies in Belgium have a tilting container for paper/cardboard in place. The collection of film in bags is also common practice. So the question was, can EPS be collected in bags together with the paper and cardboard thus saving on logistics and encouraging companies to collect and recycle EPS. After testing a number of materials for the collection bags, in 2015, woven PP bags were tested and considered to be suitable. They can hold up to 500 litres without tearing. The tests were extended to recycling partners such as Vanheede recycling services and Verpola. These tests were also successful and the quality of EPS recovered meets the required standards. Thus a system is now in place to collect smaller quantities of EPS at more locations combined with a communication program to encourage more businesses to participate.

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This innovative approach to recycling has identified a way to piggy-back on existing collection schemes so that businesses do not have to restructure their systems to incorporate EPS collection. With the introduction of sturdy woven PP collection bags, small quantities of EPS can be collected together with paper and cardboard and sorted at recycling centres. Thanks to a dedicated communication program, 70 companies are now active in this scheme and more to follow.

PARTNERS

Val-I-Pac, Fostplus, Vanheede, Suez, Shanks

“By introducing the woven bags for collection, we offer businesses an easy way to collect EPS as part of their existing recycling infrastructure. This lowers the barriers to adoption.”

Jens Poelaert VAL-I-PAC