FOOD & BEVERAGE CARTON RECYCLING FACTS & FIGURES

1 Food and beverage cartons have a low carbon footprint in their core categories of milk and juice

Food and beverage cartons are paper-based packaging and are, on average, made of (by weight):

75% paperboard

21% polymers

4% aluminium

The fibres used to produce food and beverage cartons all come from **sustainably managed forests as certified** by internationally recognized certification schemes such as **FSC or PEFC**.

~59% of juice packed in food and beverage cartons*

~75% of milk packed in food and beverage cartons**

Food and beverage cartons are a composite material which provides unique functionalities in terms of protecting, transporting and storing sensitive beverages and food.

Food and beverage cartons have a lower carbon footprint than the alternatives for perishable products, it reduces food waste by allowing long shelf life without refrigeration.

2 Collection as a pre-condition to recycling

Collection is the first step to recycling! Our industry is committed to work towards an increased recycling of food and beverage cartons but we need the enabling conditions to be successful, namely a well functioning collection system.

Such a system will provide the predictability needed for investments both in sorting and recycling.

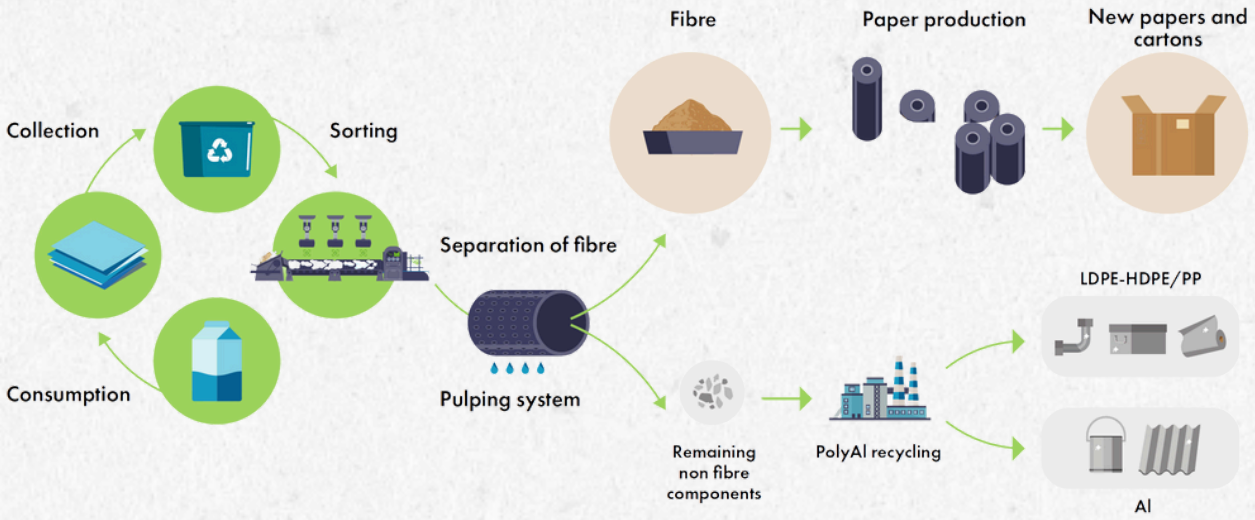
In 2023, **roughly 50%** of beverage cartons **were collected for recycling** in EU30.

Type of collection schemes for beverage cartons**

* Juice: 2018 Liquid Fruit Market Report

** Roland Berger, "Impact assessment study of an EU-wide collection for recycling target of beverage cartons" (2022)

3 Food and beverage carton recycling process



Recycling means that the material recovered end up in suitable and sustainable new products as per the definition of high quality recycling in art 3.41 PPWR*.

A narrow interpretation e.g. calling for packaging to packaging recycling would hinder well-functioning systems, as the ones for beverage cartons or other paper products, and would have a negative economic and environmental impact through increased transport throughput Europe with no real benefit as the material used in other products (e.g. sanitary products) would need to be replaced by virgin fibres. In addition, food safety regulation restricts the use of recycled fibres in food contact applications, especially for microbiologically sensitive products.*

4 Industry investments in recycling

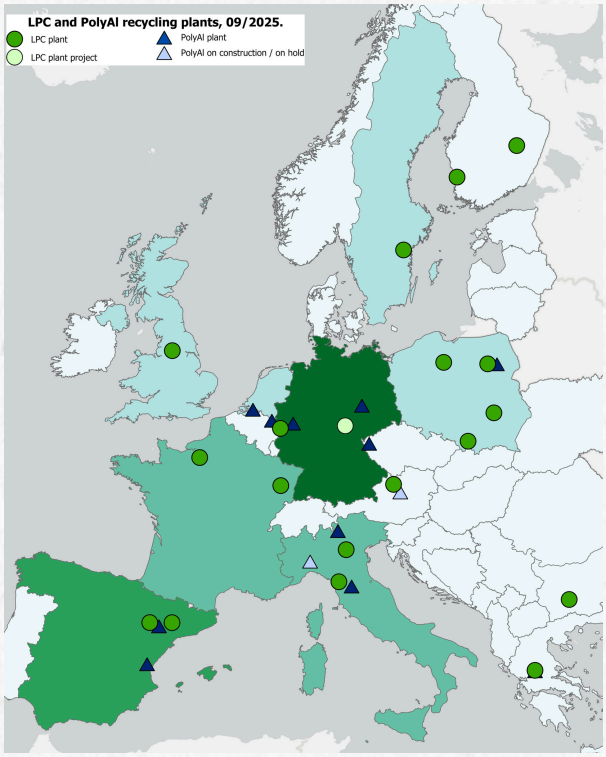
~EUR 200m

The food and beverage carton industry has invested ~EUR 200 m into recycling capacities.**

~EUR 120-150m

The food and beverage carton industry plans to further invest EUR ~120-150m by 2027 (of which ~2/3 for PolyAl recycling capacities).**

Overview of the operational UBC and polyAl recycling facilities in Europe.***



*'High-quality recycling' means any recycling process which produces recycled materials that are of equivalent quality to the original materials, based on preserved technical characteristics, and that are used as a substitute to primary raw materials for packaging or other applications where the quality of the recycled material is retained.

** Roland Berger, "Impact assessment study of an EU-wide collection for recycling target of beverage cartons" (2022)

*** Source: FBCA