

# Packaging Waste in Ireland in 2020

September 2022



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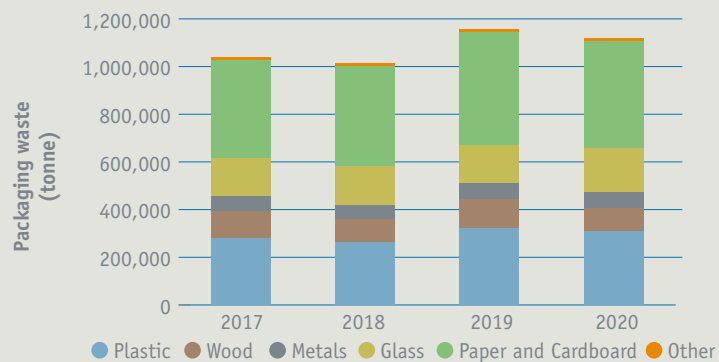
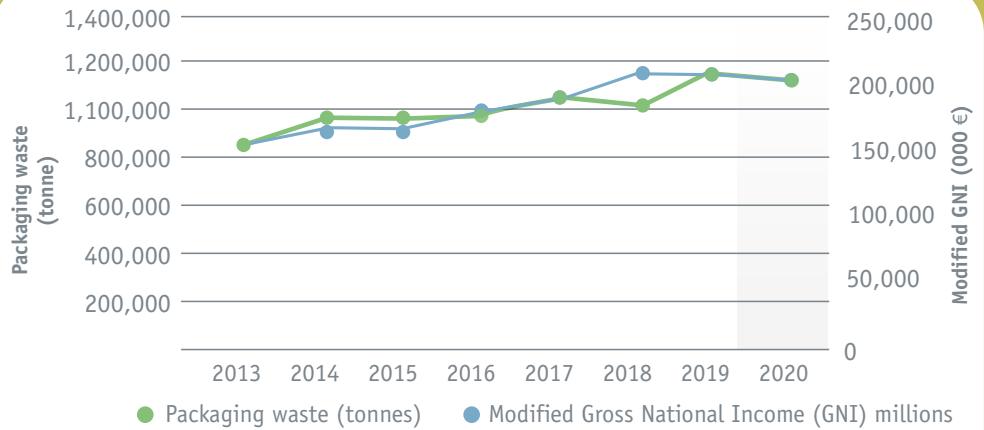
## Generation



For the fourth year in a row, Ireland generated **OVER 1 MILLION TONNES** of packaging waste.



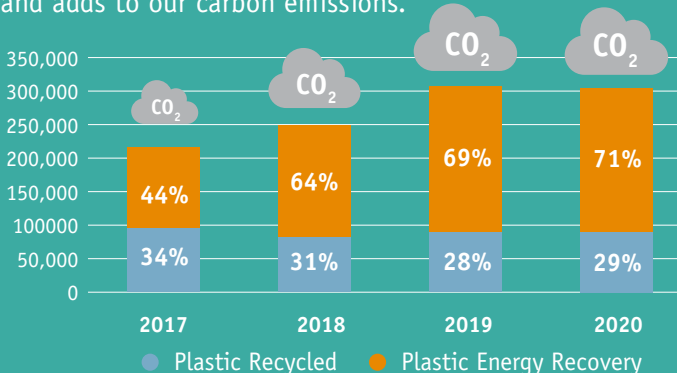
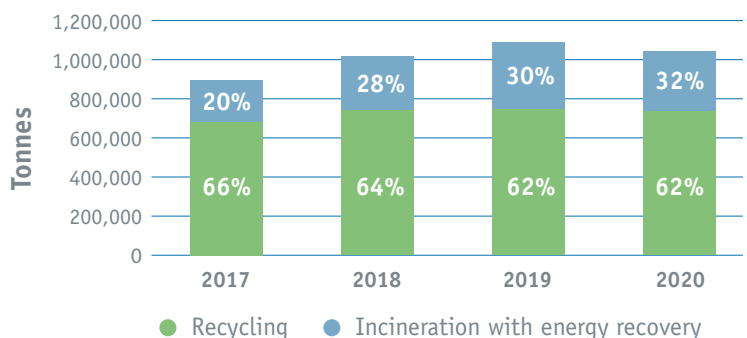
Packaging accounts for **one-third** of all waste collected at kerbside.



## Treatment

In 2020, almost a third of our packaging waste was sent for incineration with energy recovery. We need to divert more of this to recycling to meet our recycling targets.

The share of plastic going for energy recovery is continuing to grow, this limits progress on plastic recycling and adds to our carbon emissions.



331,962 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>

122,949 tonnes plastic packaging treated at municipal incinerators in 2019.

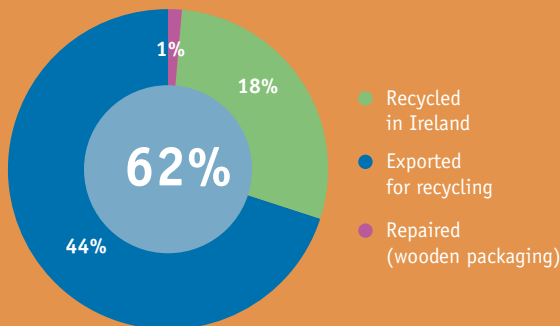
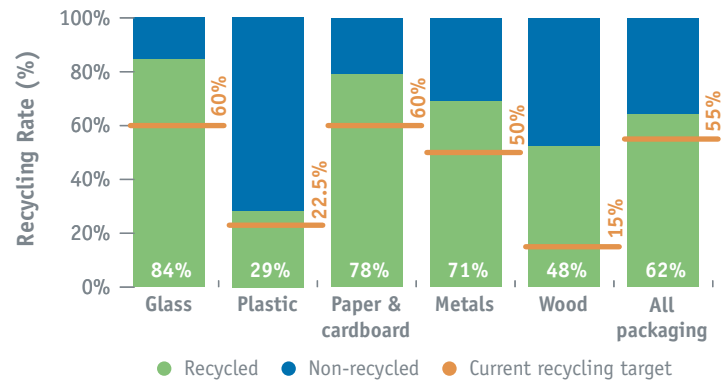


Equivalent to annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from a town the size of Kilkenny.

# Recycling

**62% OF IRELAND'S** packaging waste was recycled in 2020, no change from 2019.

Ireland is meeting current recycling targets, but in particular for plastic, recycling must improve to meet 2025 targets.



Of the packaging waste that was recycled in 2020, just 204,000 tonnes (18%) was recycled in Ireland, mainly glass and wood. Almost all our plastic and paper was exported.

## Key actions for Government & Industry

Targeted financial and regulatory measures are needed to improve recycling and reduce packaging waste generation.



### PREVENT WASTE

strengthen measures to minimise the quantity of single use packaging placed on the market.



### EXPAND REUSABLE PACKAGING

identify packaging types prime for replacement with reusable alternatives, begin phase-in of alternatives

Ireland reported using 8,000 tonnes of reusable packaging in 2020. This repeat use saved on 64,000 tonnes of packaging waste. This shows the potential of reuse to stop the growth in waste packaging. The European Union will use data from member states to set reuse targets in 2024. Examples of reusable packaging include wooden pallets, metal kegs, and various plastic bulk containers, trays, boxes and buckets.



### SUPPORT THE INCREASED USE OF RECYCLED MATERIALS

in packaging including the possible introduction of a levy on virgin plastic.



### INCENTIVISE RECYCLING OVER INCINERATION WITH ENERGY RECOVERY

in line with the waste hierarchy and circular economy.



### IMPROVE SEPARATE COLLECTION

of recyclables including roll out of a deposit-return scheme and incentivised charging system for waste collection to encourage proper segregation.

For more information, check out the [EPA website](https://www.epa.ie).  
Check out [www.mywaste.ie](https://www.mywaste.ie) for more advice & tips on how you can manage & prevent waste.



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