

Building Europe's raw material supply: 86% of plastic sorted at Site Zero is recycled EU's highest recycling standard

A new traceability mapping from Svensk Plaståtervinning (Swedish Plastic Recycling) shows that as much as 86 per cent of the plastic packaging sorted at Site Zero in Motala, Sweden, is recycled at EU's highest quality standard – an outcome achieved through the combined effort of Site Zero's advanced sorting and certified recycling partners within the EU. The material is recycled into products of the same or equivalent quality as the original – directly replacing virgin fossil raw material. Under the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), this is defined as high-quality recycling.

As Europe accelerates its transition to a circular economy, access to high-quality recycled plastic feedstock within the EU has become a strategic industrial question – and from 2030, a legal requirement. The PPWR will require plastic packaging placed on the European market to contain a minimum share of recycled content. The EU Circular Economy Act, expected during autumn 2026, is set to further strengthen the framework for circular material flows across the continent.

Building recycling capacity within the EU goes beyond regulatory compliance. It reduces Europe's dependence on virgin fossil raw materials, strengthens supply security and builds resilience against volatile fossil fuel prices. It also makes it easier to verify and control that recycled material genuinely is what it claims to be – which requires traceability and transparency throughout the value chain, from sorting to end product.

Svensk Plaståtervinning has for several years worked in close partnership with its recycling clients, setting requirements on how sorted fractions are processed and what they become. The company has now for the first time completed a comprehensive mapping of the end-use destinations for each fraction – made possible by the traceability system and verification processes already in place. The model is audited by an independent third party and has been recognised by Eurostat as a model for the EU.

"Traceability is not only about control – it is about credibility and quality. 86 per cent high-quality recycling is a very high result and reflects years of building a world-class sorting process and working closely with our recycling partners around a shared circular vision," says Mattias Philipsson, CEO of Svensk Plaståtervinning.

What the plastic becomes

Of the 86 per cent recycled at high quality in 2025, 7 per cent became new packaging approved for food contact – made possible by RecyClass certification for PET bottles, PET trays and polystyrene (PS) packaging. 18 per cent was converted into other plastic packaging and 61 per cent into other high-quality plastic products such as

luggage, cleaning equipment and larger containers. In every case, the recycled feedstock directly replaced virgin fossil raw material.

The remaining 14 per cent was recycled at lower quality – into products such as pallets and construction materials – primarily replacing other virgin materials such as wood.

Ready to deliver – and building European supply

As 2030 approaches, demand for high-quality recycled plastic feedstock will grow substantially. Today, 61 per cent of material from Site Zero becomes plastic products rather than new packaging, but a large share of this material could technically have replaced virgin plastic in packaging applications. This is driven by current demand patterns in the packaging industry.

"We are ready to supply the market. We are one of very few actors in Europe that can already today deliver recycled plastic feedstock in the volume and quality that will be required from 2030. Keeping sorting and recycling within the EU is not only a climate question – it is about building strategic supply security, reducing dependence on fossil raw materials and ensuring that recycled material genuinely is what it claims to be," says Mattias Philipsson.

Site Zero has an annual capacity of 200,000 tonnes and sorts plastic packaging into mono-fractions – a prerequisite for material to be recycled back to equivalent quality. The facility receives visitors from across the world and Svensk Plaståtervinning is an active participant in EU legislative processes, including the PPWR and the forthcoming Circular Economy Act.

For more information, please contact

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Svensk Plaståtervinning AB offers a nationwide system for the collection and circular recycling of plastic packaging in Sweden for businesses with producer responsibility. In the autumn of 2023, the new Site Zero facility in Motala will open, which will be the world's largest and most efficient plastic recycling facility. Site Zero creates the conditions for recycling all plastic packaging from Swedish households, completely circular with the lowest possible climate footprint.

Svensk Plaståtervinning is owned by large parts of the Swedish business community through the Plastics Industry Information Council, the grocery suppliers DLF, Svensk Handel and Svensk Dagligvaruhandel. Together with the three other material companies (Svenska Metallkretsen, Returkartong and Svensk Glasåtervinning), Svensk Plaståtervinning owns FTI (Förpackningsinsamlingen), which handles the collection of plastic packaging. Svensk Plaståtervinning is headquartered in Motala with around 100 employees. More on svenskplastatervinning.se