



2025 REPORT



**4ever
green**

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Foreword

A message from Jori Ringman, Director General of the Confederation of European Paper Industries (Cepi), host of the 4evergreen alliance.



Dear friends of 4evergreen,

In 2019, the seeds of 4evergreen started to be planted out of a simple but powerful realisation: that achieving true circularity for paper-based packaging could not be done in silos. In 2025, we celebrated another year of materialising the realisation that it required the entire value chain to sit around the same table, to listen, and to work together. In the beginning of 2020, we established a structure for it. What began as a response to regulatory uncertainty quickly became something far more ambitious: an **unprecedented collaboration** to make circularity practical, credible, and scalable across Europe.

Over the past years, 4evergreen has helped turn shared ambition into concrete progress. By focusing on recyclability, common guidance and evidence-based approaches, the alliance has contributed to a clearer understanding of what “circular by design” really means for paper-based packaging. This work has been particularly timely – arriving as Europe set out on its Green Deal journey, while circular economy principles moved from aspiration to expectation, and, ultimately, to implementation with the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation.

Above all, 4evergreen has shown that collaboration itself is a catalyst. By creating

a space where different and complementary perspectives are not only welcomed but needed, the alliance has built trust across the value chain and demonstrated that consensus is both possible and productive.

As we mark another year of great achievements, we celebrate not just what has been conquered, but the mindset that made it possible: **openness, pragmatism, and a shared commitment**. The challenges ahead remain significant, but so do the opportunities. With the same spirit of cooperation and ambition that sparked its creation, 4evergreen is well placed to continue shaping a circular, sustainable future for paper-based packaging in Europe.

Over these years, the recyclability rate for paper-based packaging has continued to increase. Year after year, we have moved closer to the target of a 90% recycling rate by 2030 for all paper-based packaging in Europe: 87% as of 2023.* Six years ago, not all believed we would make it. Now, as we continue, it seems within our reach.

With appreciation and confidence in what comes next,

Jori Ringman

*Source: Eurostat, Recycling rates for packaging waste

Message from the Chairs



Susan Brunner
Mondi Group



Tytti Peltonen
Metsä Group

Dear colleagues, members, and partners,

As 4evergreen marked another year of coordinated collaboration in 2025, this Annual Report offers a unique opportunity to highlight the year's progress and tangible outcomes – and, above all, the **people** who have shaped this journey.

The impact of our collective effort is undeniable. The past year alone saw major developments with the publication of Versions 4 of the Circularity by Design Guideline and the Guidance on Improved Collection and Sorting, and a significant increase in downloads of our deliverables, underlining the strong engagement across the sector. Encouragingly, this momentum aligns with broader progress, including the increase of recycling rate for paper-based packaging to 87% in 2023* – a powerful reminder of what coordinated action can achieve. Around one-third of our members have also actively engaged in CEN this year to support the development of a technical specification for paper-based packaging, with the initial work largely building on 4evergreen's work in recent years.

A key milestone in 2025 was our deliberate shift in terminology across the Technical Toolbox to better align with evolving regulatory frameworks, in particular the PPWR and related standardisation work. Aligning terminology with regulatory language is essential to ensure shared understanding, consistent assessment, and practical application across the value chain. By speaking the same language as policymakers, authorities, and market

operators, the Toolbox has strengthened its role as a bridge between policy objectives and real-world implementation.

These results are rooted in how 4evergreen works: as a truly collaborative platform bringing together the entire paper-based packaging value chain. Indeed, creating the Technical Toolbox has been one of 4evergreen's most tangible outcomes. It is a structured, evidence-based resource developed by and for industry professionals, policymakers, designers, recyclers, and researchers. Beyond a collection of guidelines, a living resource that is being continuously improved, the Toolbox represents a shared commitment to harmonisation, clarity, and practical implementation of circularity across Europe.

This work would not exist without the individuals behind it. Hundreds of contributors – members, workstream co-leads, technical experts, facilitators, and external stakeholders – have invested hundreds of hours, knowledge, and experience to build, test, question, and refine every element of the Toolbox. From data collection and technical validation to peer review and continuous improvement, the Toolbox reflects the strength of collective intelligence and long-term engagement. We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to making this work credible, relevant, and actionable.

Openness and inclusivity have been defining features of 4evergreen since the beginning.

*Source: Eurostat, Recycling rates for packaging waste

By welcoming feedback and engagement from members and external stakeholders alike, and opening our doors to associate members, the alliance has ensured that its work remains grounded in real-world needs, responsive to regulatory developments, and oriented towards continuous improvement.

As we look ahead, the foundation built together provides both confidence and responsibility, with our Innovation Roadmap guiding several key developments. Our focus is shifting from soft advocacy to a technical advocacy role at both EU and national levels, ensuring that our voice drives meaningful progress. Continued investment in technical work will guarantee our deliverables remain evidence-based and fully aligned with evolving regulations. We also remain committed to elevating the

use of innovative data analysis platforms, empowering members with robust data to support our goals. Last but not least, we will begin work on a practical playbook and guiding principles for high-performing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes in Europe.

These steps set a positive course for 4evergreen's future, ensuring our alliance continues to excel, to evolve and inspire collaboration across the value chain.

With appreciation for what has been achieved together, and confidence in what lies ahead,

Susan Brunner and Tytti Peltonen
4evergreen co-chairs



4EVERGREEN'S JOURNEY



2019



Cepi single-use plastics workshops brought together the paper-based packaging value chain around joint action to improve recyclability and meet evolving packaging regulations.

November
Outreach event: "A Circular Future for Packaging", Online

2021

November
Launch event: "Perfecting Circularity with Paper-based Packaging", Brussels

November
Endorsement from the European Commissioner for the Environment, Virginijus Sinkevičius

2020

2022

March
Circularity by Design Guideline Version 1



September
Guidance on Improved Collection and Sorting Version 1

November
The alliance reaches **100** members

December
Beta Release Recyclability Evaluation Protocol



January
Launch of Ambassadorship Programme to expand outreach across Europe



2024

December
Guidance on Improved Collection and Sorting Version 2



June
Circularity by Design Guideline Version 2

2023

October
Versions 3 released of Circularity by Design Guideline and Guidance on Improved Collection and Sorting



2025



January
Release of Recyclability Evaluation Protocol and annex documents

January
Launch of Associate Membership: engaging research institutes, start-ups and non-profits



April
Launch of WS Data Set, aimed at strengthening 4evergreen's evidence base

Governance

4evergreen has a governance structure based on different governing bodies and workstreams.

Sponsors' Council



The Sponsors' Council, led by the Co-Chairs, makes strategic and budget decisions for the alliance. It includes representatives from 4evergreen's Sponsors and Associates.

Sponsors are member companies in the paper-based packaging value chain supporting the alliance's purpose.

Associates are relevant organisations such as research institutes, EPR bodies, and non-profit. They have fewer rights but may join meetings, access trainings, give feedback, and participate in the Industry Association Coordination Group.

Steering Group



The Steering Group provides strategic direction and oversees the alliance's governance. Its elected members represent their segments and are senior managers committed to delivering the alliance's goals. They bring their segment's views to the group and act as 4evergreen advocates across the value chain.

The Steering Group elects the Treasurer and workstream Co-Leads, issues Terms of Reference, and monitors the alliance's progress while representing 4evergreen externally.

Secretariat



4evergreen is hosted by Cepi (the European association representing the pulp and paper industry) and managed by a Programme Director, who is responsible for the execution of the Steering Group decisions and daily management of 4evergreen.

The 4evergreen Secretariat is responsible for coordinating all internal communication, quality control for external communication, daily management and operations – including managing and communicating information between members of 4evergreen and its workstreams.

4EVERGREEN ORGANIGRAMME (MAY 2026)



Jori Ringman
Director-General, Cepi

Sponsors Council



Hans Wortman
Treasurer
(WEPA)

RECYCLING COMMITTEE



ENVIRONMENT & SAFETY COMMITTEE



Susan Brunner
Co-Chair 4evergreen
(Mondi)



Tytti Peltonen
Co-Chair 4evergreen
(Metsä Group)



Susanne Haase
Programme Director

Secretariat



Giulia Fadini
Programme Manager



Laura Nolan
Cross-WS
Coordination support



Michele Rattotti
Project Manager



Zeineb Ayari
Project Assistant

Steering Group

seg1:

TECHNOLOGY & RESEARCH



Tomas Anderson
RISE



Kerstin Haase
Heidelberger

seg2:

PULP PRODUCERS, PAPER & BOARD MANUFACTURERS & RECYCLERS



Maria Holopainen
Stora Enso



Natasha Chorlton
Ahlstrom



Tomi Lonka
MM Group



Sarah Price
Sappi

seg3:

NON-FIBRE MATERIAL SUPPLIERS



Martin Klatt
BASF



Bernhard Kainz
Dow



Alexandra Ross
HB Fuller

seg4:

PACKAGING PRODUCERS AND CONVERTERS



Andreas Helbig
Seda



Heike Schiffler
Tetra Pak



Mike Turner
GPI

seg5:

BRAND OWNERS & RETAILERS



Feliks Bezati
Mars



Kiril Dimitrov
Nestlé



Anne Guillou
L'Oréal

Technical Workstreams

WS-1: Recyclability Evaluation Protocol

Co-leads

Bernhard Hölbling
Sappi

Raymond De Schrevel
FBCA

Oana Barsan
Avery Dennison

WS-2: Circularity by Design Guideline

Co-leads

Davide Braghiroli
Tetra Pak

Anne Guillou
L'Oréal

WS-3: Guidance on Improved Collection and Sorting

Co-leads

Rory Cronin
Tetra Pak

Ajay Parmar
PepsiCo

Bernhard Zottler
MM Board and Paper

Technical advisors

Lydia Tempel
PTS

Christian Trieb
Propakma

Jérôme Ruhwiedel
4evergreen

Laura Nolan
4evergreen

Laura Nolan
4evergreen

WS Engagement & Impact

Co-leads

Delia Harabula
Amcor

Antonello Romano
Stora Enso

Tim Werkhoven
Mondi Group

WS Standardisation

Co-leads

Peter Hengesbach
Stora Enso

Thomas Walther
Baumer hhs

Technical advisors

Dennis Bankmann
Emerging MOTIF

WS Data Set

Co-leads

Claudio Berton
CMPC

Irene Ocaña Amoros
Tetra Pak

Martin Klatt
BASF

Technical advisors

Sönke Petersen
OpenEyz

Ellen Skogster
logos

Dea Metuli
logos

Ellen Skogster
logos

Chiara Gaffuri
logos

Michele Rattotti
4evergreen

Chiara Gaffuri
logos

PROJECT COORDINATOR

4evergreen in numbers



+100

industry sponsors



1

elected Steering Group members



3

landmark report



+200

tests performed

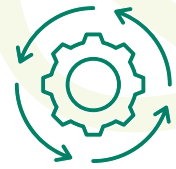
+380

packaging engineers & circularity experts in workstreams



6

active workstreams



- > recyclability evaluation protocol
- > circularity by design
- > guidance on collection & sorting
- > engagement and Impact
- > standardisation
- > data set

+600

representatives engaged in the alliance



4

intermediary targets



- > the industry adopts 4evergreen's paper-based packaging recycling guidelines and assessment protocol
- > separate collection streams are available for all paper-based packaging types
- > all paper for recycling is sorted according to the EN643 standard
- > 100% of collected paper-based packaging is recycled

6

deliverables

have been published as part of the 4evergreen toolbox since 2022

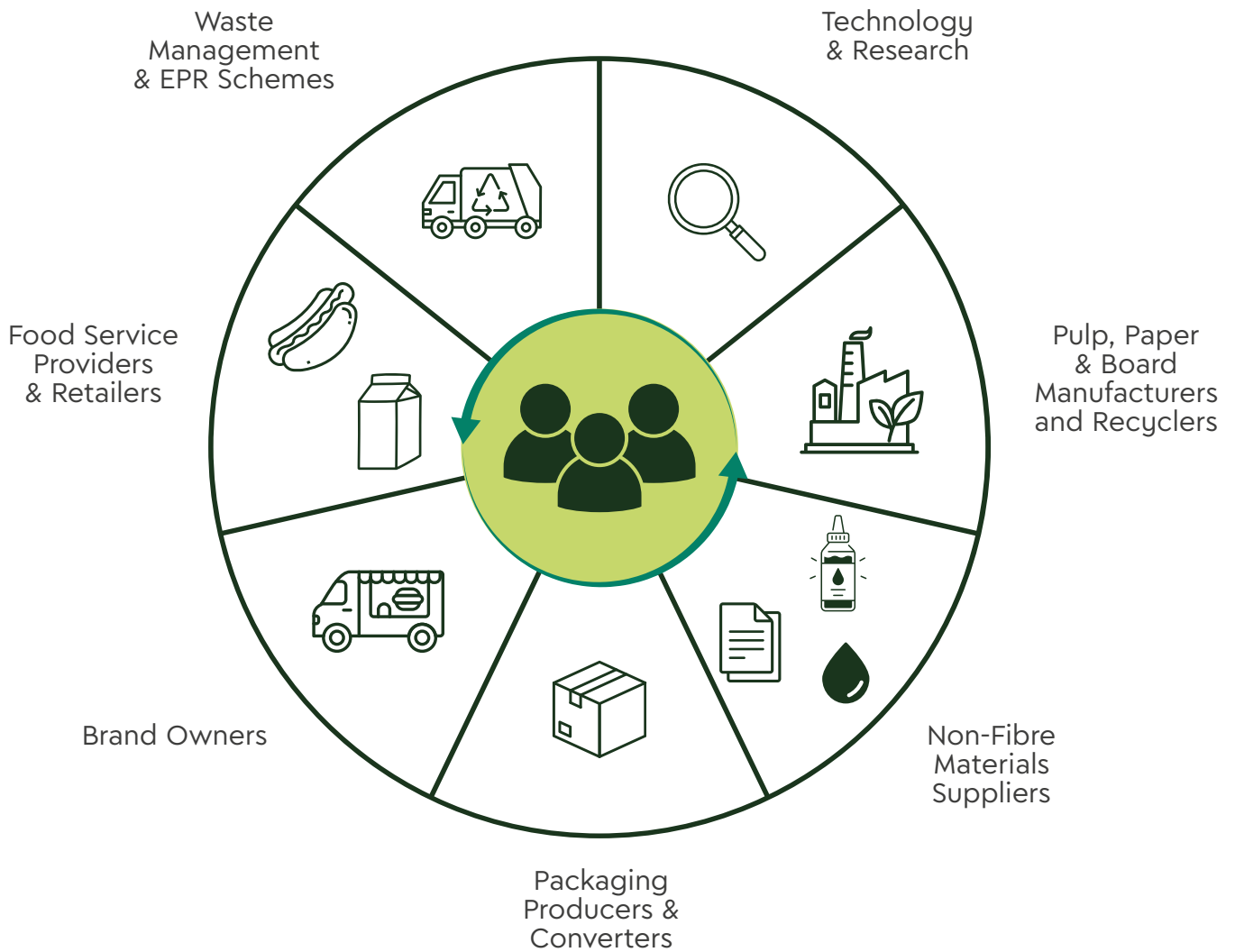


Membership

4evergreen brings together 100+ members from across the entire packaging value chain: from paper and board producers to packaging converters, brand owners and retailers, technology and research waste sorters and collectors, research organisations, technical universities, and associates.

This scale is unique for the paper-based packaging value chain.

The segments represented in 4evergreen's membership are:



Behind the scenes

Secretariat

The 4evergreen Secretariat has played a crucial role in the achievements of the past years. Programme Director Susanne Haase, an expert in the paper-based industry, together with Programme Manager Giulia Fadini have overseen alliance operations since 2020. Under their leadership, the Secretariat has helped create a collaborative environment that empowers members to deliver results across all workstreams. This foundation

allows 4evergreen's workstreams to operate seamlessly, reinforcing each other's progress and advancing the alliance's vision for a truly circular paper-based packaging system. The Secretariat team has been growing over the years, reflecting both the ambitions and growing workload of the alliance, with Michele Rattotti joining as Project Manager, Zeineb Ayari as Project Assistant, and Laura Nolan as Internal Communications Manager.

Workstreams

4evergreen's workstreams are designed to work in synergy, creating added value across the paper-based packaging value chain. By closely linking technical development, data, standardisation, and policy engagement, the workstreams ensure that insights, tools and guidance reinforce one another rather than evolve in isolation. The strength of 4evergreen's work lies in the collaborative

efforts to anticipate regulatory change and deliver practical and aligned solutions for a more circular paper-based packaging system.

Paper-based packaging is continuously evolving. There is significant innovation in the industry, and each workstream is committed to ensuring their efforts are aligned with these developments.

The workstreams of 4evergreen in 2025 included:



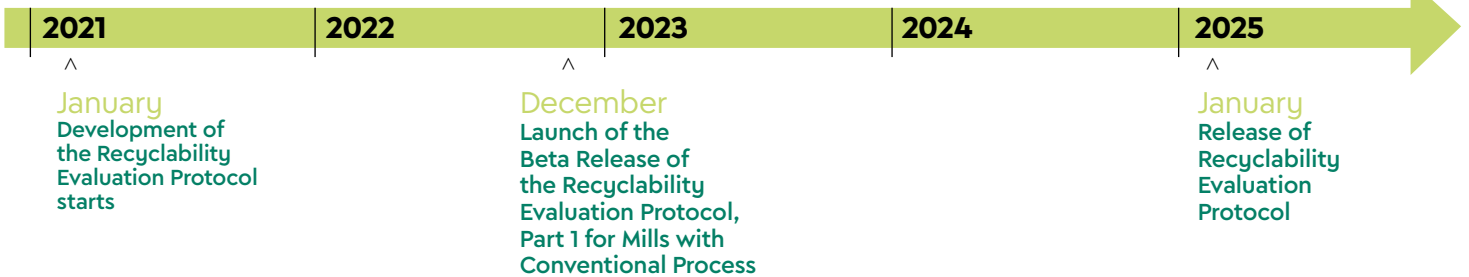
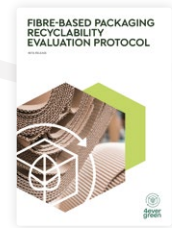


HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST 5 YEARS

WS-1 From fragmentation to harmonisation: the journey towards the Recyclability Evaluation Protocol



October
Launch of the latest Cepi
European Harmonised
Laboratory Test Method



In the words of the co-leads

Raymond De Schrevel (FBCA)
Bernhard Hölbling (Sappi)
Oana Barsan (Avery Dennison)

When we look back at the development of the Recyclability Evaluation Protocol for paper-based packaging, one reality became immediately clear: there was no single way of evaluating the recyclability of paper-based packaging. Across Europe, different test methods and evaluation approaches coexist. For brand owners active in several European countries, this meant running the same packaging through multiple national tests, answering to different criteria each time. We saw the confusion, the inefficiency, and the frustration it caused.

That experience is why harmonisation matters so deeply to us. A common European approach would mean that a paper-based packaging solution is assessed in the same way, no matter where it is placed on the market. It would bring clarity, legal certainty and, above all, trust along the value chain. The PPWR confirms that this is not just desirable, but necessary. Europe is clearly moving towards aligned recyclability criteria, and our work sits right at the heart of that transition.

At the same time, paper-based packaging is evolving. Innovations constantly emerge, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution for evaluating the recyclability of new and complex types of paper-based packaging.

WS-1 in 2025 and looking forward

In 2025, Workstream 1 launched the updated Recyclability Evaluation Protocol, building upon the Beta Release published in December 2022. In parallel, Workstream 1 successfully provided input to CEN – the European Commission’s Standardisation body – on macrostickies analysis, and drafted a Fibre-Based Composite Packaging (FBCP) scorecard and Evaluation Protocol.

In 2026, the Protocol will be closely integrated with the Circularity by Design Guideline ensuring a systematic process for evaluating paper-based packaging solutions. This “Score2Table” methodology will outline the procedures used in Workstream 2 Focus Group testing, by translating the Recyclability Evaluation Protocol score into the traffic-light system used in the Design for Recycling (DfR) tables. In addition, the FBCP Evaluation Protocol and scorecard will be completed, reflecting the latest feedback and aligning with industry standards and regulatory requirements.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST 5 YEARS

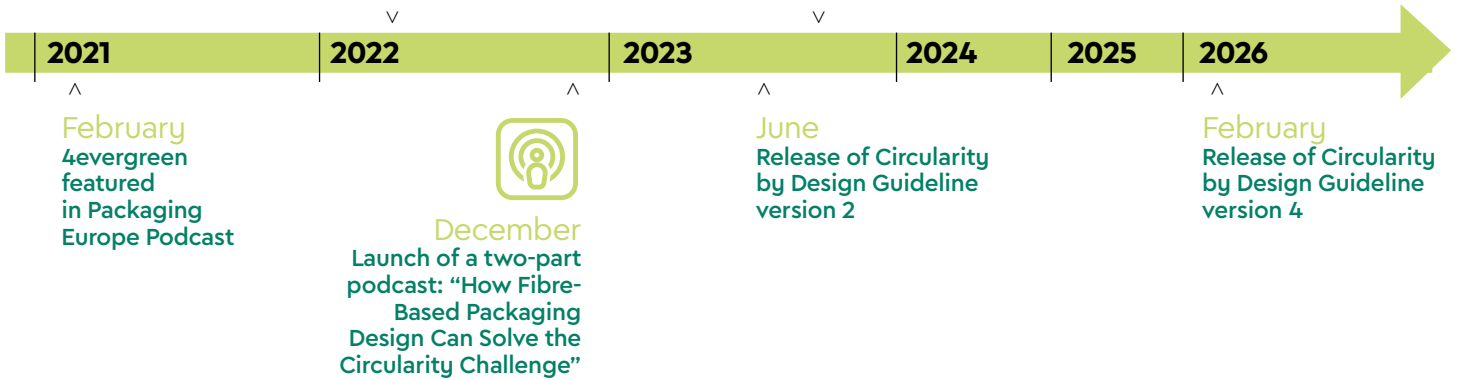
WS-2 The recipe for success: Circularity by Design Guideline



March
Release of first version of the Circularity by Design Guideline



October
Release of Circularity by Design Guideline version 3



In the words of the co-leads

Davide Braghioli (Tetra Pak)
Anne Guillou (L’Oreal)

From the very beginning, the 4evergreen deliverables have never been seen as standalone instruments. They were designed together to function as a coherent system in which each deliverable builds on the others. This was a shared conviction across the alliance: if we wanted to realise a circular model for paper-based packaging, we needed an approach that followed paper-based packaging from the first design sketch all the way to its end-of-life stage.

The Circularity by Design Guideline naturally became our starting point to improve the recyclability of paper-based packaging, since design is the moment when the most decisive choices are made. Everyone around the table agreed on one thing: recyclability is largely designed upfront. Once materials and structures are fixed, options become limited. That understanding is what shaped the Guideline, turning it into a practical reference for designers and decision-makers.

But just as clearly, we knew that a good design alone is not enough. There is no recycling without effective

collection and sorting. Those steps were brought into the framework through open discussion, ensuring that the Guideline reflects the entire reality of the recycling chain, not only one segment of it.

WS-2 in 2025 and looking forward

In 2025, Workstream 2 focused on developing version 4 of the Circularity by Design Guideline, including the terminology update across the whole document aligned with the PPWR to help designers identify the right recycling pathways as well as a new chapter on Sorting Disruptors. The Guideline provides technical recommendations on designing liquid packaging cartons (LPCs) for paper mills with specialised recycling process. Meanwhile, testing activities were also significantly expanded, supported by calls for data and sample donations from members.

In 2026, version 4 of Circularity by Design Guideline was officially published, and work will progress on version 5 and its supporting Design for Recycling tables, ensuring closer alignment with CEN. Priorities also include advancing testing activities and integrating testing results into future updates.



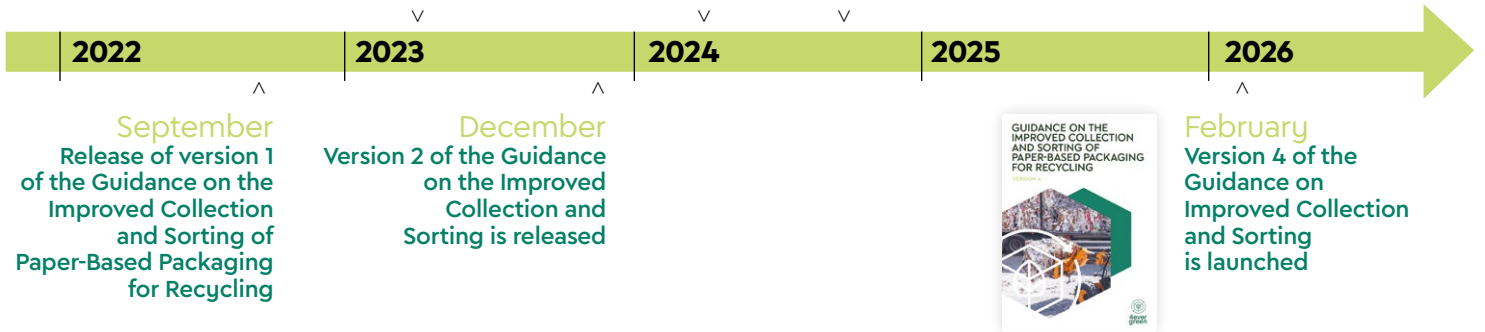
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST 5 YEARS

WS-3 Shared practices are best practices: Guidance on Improved Collection and Sorting



February
4evergreen wins European Paper Recycling Award

November
Version 3 of the Guidance on Improved Collection and Sorting is published



In the words of the co-leads

Ajay Parmar (PepsiCo)
Rory Cronin (Tetra Pak)

In our work on recycling, we quickly learned that even the best designed paper-based packaging depends on what happens after it is used. Building on a detailed review of collection and sorting systems across Europe, insights from the 4evergreen Protocol and Guideline, and the practical experience of our members, this Workstream set out to identify what truly enables paper-based packaging to be recycled in practice. These reflections led to the Guidance on Improved Collection and Sorting.

Together, we mapped best practices that can make a tangible difference across all usage contexts - whether packaging is used at home, out of home, or on the go. Our ambition is to ensure that all paper-based packaging types, including complex and multi-material solutions, are effectively collected and efficiently sorted before they enter the recycling process.

From this shared foundation, over the past years Workstream 3 has been developing clear and practical guidance for improved collection and sorting systems.

The Guidance continues to champion a two-stream household collection model – separating paper and board from lightweight packaging – to improve overall recycling yields.

WS-3 in 2025 and looking forward

In 2025, Workstream 3 focused on developing Version 4 of the Guidance on Improved Collection and Sorting for paper-based packaging. Work progressed on this guidance through the development of a new annex on sorting, designed to provide a technical overview of sorting processes and emerging technologies. Sessions held during the 4evergreen Face-to-Face event enabled exchanges on key challenges and opportunities related to collection and sorting, while collaboration continued with the Workstream Data Set team to identify and address data gaps.

Shifting into 2026, the workstream published Version 4 of the Guidance on Improved Collection and Sorting. This followed the final review and update of terminology conducted jointly with Workstream Standardisation and Workstream Engagement & Impact, further showcasing the collaborative core of 4evergreen’s work.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST 5 YEARS

WS Standardisation: Improved alignment across workstreams and with CEN



May
Translation of the
4evergreen Circularity
by Design Guideline
and Recyclability
Evaluation Protocol



2025



January
Kick-start of group
activities



November
First Face-to-Face
session of workstream
in Brussels

In the words of the co-leads

Peter Hengesbach (Stora Enso)
Thomas Walther (Baumer hhs)

When we speak about standardisation, we talk about the next chapter in a journey that began years earlier around a shared table. That work is now unfolding within European standardisation bodies, notably CEN, where technical experts are translating what the 4evergreen alliance has been building together over the past years into formal European standards.

Bringing the alliance's work into the standardisation system matters. It is the moment when ideas that started as a voluntary, collaborative effort become recognised and usable by everyone across the value chain. What began as shared guidance, shaped through discussion and trust, is gradually turning into common rules that all actors across the paper-based packaging value chain can rely on. In many ways, this step acknowledges that the groundwork has already been done. The alliance has tested concepts, aligned perspectives, and created a Technical Toolbox that is now mature enough to support Europe's circular economy ambitions at scale.

Throughout this process, one principle has remained constant: no single perspective can define success.

Designers, converters, brand owners, collection systems, and recyclers all experience recyclability differently. Standardisation, therefore, is not about choosing one viewpoint over another, but about bringing these realities together and finding a workable balance. That same spirit of dialogue continues within CEN discussions today.

WS Standardisation in 2025 and looking forward

In 2025, WS Standardisation formally launched its activities. A key focus was aligning 4evergreen deliverables with CEN processes, including translating documents into the CEN format to support consultation in CEN/TC261/WG3. Terminology alignment progressed throughout the year, with consultation and feedback phases involving technical workstreams and Steering Group validation. Face-to-face sessions and joint meetings supported alignment between 4evergreen and CEN and enabled members to actively contribute to the CEN comment resolution process.

In 2026, the workstream will support closer alignment between the technical workstreams, PPWR requirements and CEN principles, including the launch of monthly alignment meetings with the Technical Workstreams. We are also aligning our deliverables following the publication of the CEN Technical Specification (TC 261) expected in July, a key activity for 4evergreen in 2026.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST 5 YEARS

WS Data Set: Building a Trusted Foundation for Evidence-Based Progress



May
Workstream co-leads approved

2025

April
Workstream Data Set was officially launched

November/December
Identified the data collection priorities for 2026

In the words of the co-leads

Claudio Berton (CMPC)
Irene Ocaña Amoros (Tetra Pak)
Martin Klatt (BASF)

As an alliance, we reached a point where conviction, test results and expertise alone were no longer enough. Across our discussions, one shared realisation kept surfacing: if we wanted to be impactful, we needed to ground our work in data that everyone trusts. That moment marked the beginning of the Data Set workstream.

Building on existing data and the collective expertise of our members, we set out to create a common foundation for evidence-based insights. The goal was clear: to turn information into robust proof points that allow us to track progress and monitor 4evergreen's targets over time. It was about creating a shared reference that could support strategy, technical work, and policy engagement alike.

Together, we designed a system to efficiently collect, store, and analyse data in a way that is both rigorous and workable for contributors. Through targeted data collection exercises and specific assignments, we generate insights at different levels: granular where detail matters, consolidated where strategic overview is needed. This ensures that data can meaningfully inform decisions across the alliance. The project started with the collection of recycling rate data by packaging type, sourced from

public reports throughout the EU and processed in data analysis platforms that help drive our mission forward.

What makes this work powerful is its collective nature. Data gives us a common language. It allows different workstreams to align, strengthens our external credibility, and helps us move from intention to measurable impact. Over time, it transforms expert knowledge into evidence and ambition into demonstrable results.

WS Data Set in 2025 and looking forward

In 2025, the WS Data Set officially launched its work, holding its first meeting in April and bringing members together during a face-to-face meeting in Brussels. The workstream established its leadership, with co-leads approved by members, and consolidated inputs from across the alliance to identify data gaps and define data collection priorities. The attendees of the workstream also had the opportunity to exchange during an insightful meeting with representatives from data management and analytics tool.

In 2026, the data collection on recycling rates by packaging type will be launched, working closely with members to align on the approach and gather initial inputs. Collaboration with our Technical Advisor will focus on structuring and populating data analysis platforms, ensuring the data set is structured and usable across all members.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST 5 YEARS

WS Engagement and Impact: The bridge between our technical expertise and the world out there



October
4evergreen workshop at the European Parliament

November
Launch of the Circular Success Stories

April
Visit to Cabinet Jessika Roswall, EU Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy



In the words of the co-leads

Antonello Romano (Stora Enso)
Delia Harabula (Amcor)

Behind every technical breakthrough, there is a simple question we kept coming back to as a group: how do we make the alliance’s work understood, trusted, and useful beyond our technical circles? As the co-leads of the Engagement and Impact workstream, this question guides much of our work.

Sitting in meetings with policymakers and regulators, it quickly became clear that technical expertise alone is not enough. What they need is clarity, evidence, and reassurance that policy ambition can be translated into something that works in practice. This is particularly true when it comes to the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation. The PPWR raises important expectations around recyclability, but turning those expectations into workable criteria requires a constant exchange between policy and reality on the ground.

Our role is to act as that bridge. Together with the colleagues from the technical workstreams, we translate complex methodologies into solid facts that can inform policy discussions in a constructive way. Engagement with the European Commission and the Joint Research Centre is a key part of this journey. Those exchanges are never unidirectional. We bring real insights into the policy

space, and we carry questions, concerns, and scientific input back into the alliance to refine our work.

WS Engagement and Impact in 2025 and looking forward

What was previously known as WS Information and Outreach changed its name to Engagement and Impact to reflect the alliance’s shift from soft to technical advocacy, with the aim of positioning 4evergreen as a go-to place for technical expertise for policymakers in defining key regulations for the sectors.

In 2025, key milestones included ambassador activities at events such as Empack and Fachpack, hosting an EU Green Week Partner Event, alongside the launch of the revamped 4evergreen website at the Annual Conference. The workstream also redesigned the newsletter, delivered internal and external webinars, and advanced communication tools such as the annual report, brochure, message bank, and social media strategies. Engagement with EU stakeholders also included a visit to Cabinet Roswall.

In 2026, the workstream is promoting the updated deliverables, supporting ambassadors at key industry events, and working with newly appointed outreach representatives to strengthen engagement with policymakers. Activities will also support upcoming webinars and the 4evergreen face-to-face meeting in May.

Circularity Success Stories Awards

2025 WINNERS

Launched in November 2023, the Circularity Success Stories Awards recognise outstanding and breakthrough projects within the alliance and beyond that exemplify circular paper-based packaging in practice. By showcasing how these projects apply 4evergreen tools and guidance, the Awards demonstrate the practical relevance of the alliance's deliverables in advancing circularity and sustainability.

In 2025, a new category was also introduced: Projects or products that enhance innovation in paper-based packaging, recognising initiatives that drive progress through new approaches, tools or solutions.

1. Paper-based packaging products designed for circularity



ProducePack™ Punnet Tray — Graphic Packaging International

A sustainable alternative to PET trays. By replacing plastic trays for fresh produce at major European retailers, it eliminates 17 million plastic trays annually for berries at one UK retailer.

2. Projects or products supporting effective collection and sorting



MM Paper Bottle — MM Group

A lightweight, sustainable approach to liquid packaging. Its cardboard body and mono-PE spouted pouch reduce reliance on fossil-based plastics while maintaining functionality.

3. Projects or products enabling enhanced recycling processes



Recyclability Evaluation Service — DS Smith

Evidence-based recyclability scores using the CEPI methodology and 4evergreen's protocol.

4. Projects or products that enhance innovation in paper-based packaging



Vinci Ecolaminate — RDM Group & Ecopol

A product that combines recycled cartonboard with biodegradable PVOH film to create a recyclable barrier for aroma-sensitive and food products.



Ambassadorship Programme Highlights

As part of 4evergreen’s continued ambition to drive industry uptake of its deliverables, the WS Engagement and Impact has been strengthening the Ambassadorship Programme launched in 2024 to ensure the alliance is prominently represented at key industry and sustainability events.

Through the Ambassadorship Programme, our members have the opportunity to demonstrate their organisation’s commitment to circularity and sustainability, while actively supporting the promotion and uptake of the alliance’s tools and guidelines.

Throughout 2025, the programme has been representing the entire paper-based packaging value chain. Through the programme, 4evergreen was represented at Fackback and Empack, and organised an event in the European Green Week, highlighting the alliance’s collaborative work through detailed contributions.


Packaging and sustainability events provide a crucial platform to promote 4evergreen’s work and increase the visibility of its Technical Toolbox. Widespread adoption of our deliverables across the paper-based value chain is essential to achieving our objective of a 90% recycling rate for paper-based packaging by 2030.

“

Being a 4evergreen Ambassador means actively contributing my expertise to advance a circular, paper-based packaging system and acting as a bridge between science, industry, and policy.

Andreas Helbig, Seda Group



Many thanks for your continued engagement as 4evergreen Ambassadors 

- Elodie Bugnicourt (Graphic Packaging International)
- Natasha Chorlton (Ahlstrom)
- Andreas Helbig (Seda Group)
- Bernhard Kainz (Dow)
- Paul Krochak (Graphic Packaging International)
- Ralf Mack (Graphic Packaging International)
- Skye Oudemans (Sonoco)
- Tytti Peltonen (Metsä Group)

- Eadaoin Quinn (Mars)
- Antonello Romano (Stora Enso)
- Usman Shaukat (Delfortgroup / Delsci)
- Mike Turner (Graphic Packaging International)
- Gwenael Vallantin (Suzano)
- Florian Wagner (Elopak)
- Thomas Walther (Baumer hhs)
- Hans Wortman (wepa)
- Eric Yu (UPM Speciality Papers)

And to our Ambassador Member Companies
Mondi Group, Metsä Group, PTS Fibre based solutions, Elopak.

2025 Annual Conference

The 2025 4evergreen Annual Conference marked a key moment for the alliance, gathering 130 experts and stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and challenges of advancing circularity in paper-based packaging. From technical sessions to broad and engaging discussions on advancing circularity in paper-based packaging, the event showed what can happen when science, industry and policy work together.

Through open exchanges and hands-on sessions, the conference highlighted the importance of collaboration in turning shared ambition into action. Participants explored how the industry can design paper-based packaging that is not only recyclable in principle, but also circular in practice. Hands-on sessions with the 4evergreen Technical Toolbox encouraged attendees to test methodologies, challenge assumptions, and share operational insights from their markets.

The panel discussion, featuring Matteo Magnani (Joint Research Centre, European Commission), Tom Vöge (PRO Circularity Alliance), Antonello Romano (Stora Enso) and Nina Peacock (Kellanova), alongside a keynote by Marco Eikelenboom (CEO, Sappi Europe; Chairman of Cepi),

showed how the sector is setting the framework for new EU regulations, positioning circularity in paper-based packaging as both a regulatory necessity and an opportunity for innovation.



Communication and outreach achievements

External communications



Engagement



Looking at the future: road to 2030

Throughout 2026, the energy behind 4evergreen is set to grow even stronger. The alliance is poised to make bold strides across the technical, policy, and standardisation landscapes, with the rollout of an updated Technical Toolbox. This represents a cornerstone for harmonising industry standards, offering practical solutions that empower every element of the paper-based packaging value chain. Our collaborative approach will see deeper connections with policymakers, as workstream experts team up to deliver clarity and support around evolving regulatory requirements, ensuring that good policy translates into great practice.

Our contribution within CEN will be amplified through our members' presence, anchoring standardisation processes in the reality of industry experience and technical know-how. One of our goals for the year is making sure standards are genuinely fit for purpose and reflective of what works in real-world settings. The alliance's outlook is decidedly positive, with plans to secure

4evergreen's extension through 2028 – demonstrating our commitment to long-term impact. Now, the focus shifts from soft advocacy to positioning 4evergreen as a robust, technical voice at both EU and national levels, so the sector's needs are heard where it counts most. Investments in technical research and innovation will keep our deliverables reliable, evidence-driven, and at the cutting edge, cementing our reputation as a trusted industry leader.

Advanced analytics and robust data will drive measurable, actionable insights. 4evergreen will strengthen its role in harmonising design-for-recycling assessments, providing clearer guidance and a more level playing field for industry. A major 2026 milestone will be a practical EPR playbook offering step-by-step support across Europe, with deliverables increasingly grounded in industrial-scale test results. Together, this reflects a forward-looking community leading the transition to circular paper-based packaging.



But what does it truly mean to be a member of 4evergreen? Membership offers the opportunity to shape the future of paper-based packaging, collaborate with innovators across the value chain, and influence policy and standards from the inside out. You become part of a dynamic network, united by a shared commitment to circularity and sustainability, where every member's input helps drive industry-wide progress. Whether contributing technical expertise, sharing

operational insights, or representing the alliance at key events, members are at the heart of 4evergreen's mission – making a tangible difference for the environment, the industry, and society as a whole.

Joining 4evergreen means stepping into an active role, amplifying your voice and impact, and helping forge a circular economy that is built to last.

4EVERGREEN MEMBERS IN 2025



4EVERGREEN ASSOCIATE MEMBERS





**4ever
green**

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