



Recommendation of the Council on Waste Paper Recovery

**OECD Legal
Instruments**

This document is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. It reproduces an OECD Legal Instrument and may contain additional material. The opinions expressed and arguments employed in the additional material do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD Member countries.

This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

For access to the official and up-to-date texts of OECD Legal Instruments, as well as other related information, please consult the Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments at <http://legalinstruments.oecd.org>.

Please cite this document as:

OECD, *Recommendation of the Council on Waste Paper Recovery*, OECD/LEGAL/0184

Series: OECD Legal Instruments

© OECD 2025

This document is provided free of charge. It may be reproduced and distributed free of charge without requiring any further permissions, as long as it is not altered in any way. It may not be sold.

This document is available in the two OECD official languages (English and French). It may be translated into other languages, as long as the translation is labelled "unofficial translation" and includes the following disclaimer: "This translation has been prepared by [NAME OF TRANSLATION AUTHOR] for informational purpose only and its accuracy cannot be guaranteed by the OECD. The only official versions are the English and French texts available on the OECD website <http://legalinstruments.oecd.org>"

Background Information

The Recommendation on Waste Paper Recovery was adopted on 30 January 1980 on the proposal of the Environment Committee (now called Environment Policy Committee). The Recommendation advises Adherents to encourage waste paper recovery via instruments to increase both the demand for recycled paper and the supply of waste paper, while taking due account of social costs and benefits.

THE COUNCIL,

HAVING REGARD to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 14 November 1974 on the Implementation of the Polluter-Pays Principle [C(74)223];

CONSIDERING the need for ensuring that the costs of the adverse environmental impacts of the manufacture and discard of paper are effectively and equitably borne by the producers and users of paper;

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 28 September 1976 on a Comprehensive Waste Management Policy, and, in particular, Principles 3 and 4 thereof calling upon Member countries to develop and implement measures aiming at reducing the generation of waste and promoting recycling, whilst ensuring that these measures do not lead to distortion in international trade [C(76)155(Final)];

CONSIDERING that waste paper accounts for a significant proportion (25 to 50 per cent) of municipal refuse, and that a large part of it is technically recoverable for use in paper and board manufacture;

CONSIDERING that waste paper can also be used profitably for purposes other than the production of paper and board, and that research is underway to develop further such uses;

CONSIDERING that paper and board manufacture through the use of recycled fibres is generally less energy consuming and less polluting than the same manufacture through virgin pulp production;

CONSIDERING that the economics of waste paper recycling for paper and board manufacture are dominated by large fluctuations in waste paper prices;

CONSIDERING that the high costs of collection and sorting often keep the recycling of household waste paper below the level that this would be socially desirable;

CONSIDERING however that any saving in waste disposal costs, resulting from waste paper recycling, must be taken into account when calculating the economic balance of recycling;

HAVING REGARD to the Report by the Environment Committee on waste paper recovery, where practical measures which can be envisaged for implementing this Recommendation are discussed in detail;

On the proposal of the Environment Committee:

I. RECOMMENDS that Member countries define and implement policies designed to increase the use of recycled fibres in paper products and to encourage increased recovery of waste paper for paper and board production as well as for other uses, taking due account of social costs and benefits associated with such actions.

II. INVITES Member countries to consider the advisability of using to this effect practical measures directed towards increasing and matching both the demand for recycled paper products and the supply of secondary fibres, such as:

With regard to demand:

- Encouraging the use of paper with a high content of recycled fibres, in particular by public agencies and those official services which can set an example;
- Altering final product specifications when such specifications discriminate unduly against recycled paper, or when the presence of contaminants make recycling more difficult;

- Promoting the design of printing and copying equipment better suited to the use of paper with a high recycled fibre content;
- Implementing active information and education programmes, directed to consumers, users and manufacturers, to promote paper products made from recycled fibres;
- Promoting upgrading techniques, and in particular de-inking, notably through co-operation among paper manufacturers in order to reduce costs and take full benefit from large scale production;
- Promoting uses for waste paper other than paper and board manufacture, with due care not to destroy the balance between demand and supply of waste paper.

With regard to supply:

- Promoting the collection of high grade waste papers within those organisations which are large consumers of paper products (private and public services, office buildings, etc.);
- Promoting low cost collection methods and encouraging household waste paper collection;
- Encouraging active public participation in waste paper recovery schemes;
- Promoting means of ensuring a sufficient and sustained supply of waste paper to paper and board manufacturers;
- Improving municipal accounting procedures for solid waste collection and disposal, so that all costs and savings are taken into account;
- Studying and experimenting with methods to reduce waste paper market fluctuations.

About the OECD

The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

The OECD Member countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union takes part in the work of the OECD.

OECD Legal Instruments

Since the creation of the OECD in 1961, around 460 substantive legal instruments have been developed within its framework. These include OECD Acts (i.e. the Decisions and Recommendations adopted by the OECD Council in accordance with the OECD Convention) and other legal instruments developed within the OECD framework (e.g. Declarations, international agreements).

All substantive OECD legal instruments, whether in force or abrogated, are listed in the online Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments. They are presented in five categories:

- **Decisions** are adopted by Council and are legally binding on all Members except those which abstain at the time of adoption. They set out specific rights and obligations and may contain monitoring mechanisms.
- **Recommendations** are adopted by Council and are not legally binding. They represent a political commitment to the principles they contain and entail an expectation that Adherents will do their best to implement them.
- **Substantive Outcome Documents** are adopted by the individual listed Adherents rather than by an OECD body, as the outcome of a ministerial, high-level or other meeting within the framework of the Organisation. They usually set general principles or long-term goals and have a solemn character.
- **International Agreements** are negotiated and concluded within the framework of the Organisation. They are legally binding on the Parties.
- **Arrangement, Understanding and Others:** several other types of substantive legal instruments have been developed within the OECD framework over time, such as the Arrangement on Officially Supported Export Credits, the International Understanding on Maritime Transport Principles and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendations.