

Recycle and recovery of waste in Italy: how is it going?

This report focuses on the waste situation in Italy in 2024 as mentioned in the annual publication of ISPRA (a National Agency for Environmental Protection) and on the comparison between 2024 and 2014.

https://www.isprambiente.gov.it/en?set_language=en

The inhabitants in Italy in 2024 were 59 million; this figure represents a slight decrease from the previous years and is part of a trend of a declining population. The total municipal waste collected in 2024 was approximately 29.3 million tonnes and the waste was 496 kg per person.

In 2024 almost 97% of the Italian population was covered by separate waste collection, and national separate rates exceeded 65%.

In 2024 the total amount of municipal waste separately collected was approximately 19.5 million tonnes (66.6% of the total produced). The composition is dominated by organic fraction (biowaste), but the major recyclable materials contribute significantly to the total mass.

Material fraction	Estimated %
Organic waste (biowaste)	38%
Paper and cardboard	19%
Glass	12%
Plastic	9%
Wood	5%
Metals	3%
Other materials	14%

Italy's strengths are the success in collecting food and green waste for composting/anaerobic digestion and the increase in paper and cardboard fraction, whereas the current challenge is reaching the EU targets for the recycling rate of plastic packaging, area in which Italy is slightly behind but improving.

In 2024, Italy recycled 49.2% of its separately collected waste in comparison to 2014 when it was only 39,9%.

In 2024 the recycling yards that were registered were 4.662 in total (representing 43.1% of all waste plants).

In 2014 separate waste collection in the average was 35.3%, while by 2024 it increased to 66.6%.

To conclude, comparing data from the last decade, the amount of waste that was correctly collected has doubled, although the recycled material didn't grow as much: we can be quite satisfied but we can still improve both separate collection and recycling. 😊