

Landfill is the last option

Flanders: Targets for household waste achieved.

The MIRA Flanders Environment Indicator Report is wrapped in a new cover every year, but the content is familiar: a selection of environmental indicators with the latest data that encompass the entire field of the environment. But the report, lately published by the Vlaamse Milieumaatschappij (VMM = Flemish Environment Agency) shows: There is something done in Flemish waste management.

Primary, secondary, hazardous waste

In 2008, the trade & services sector produced an estimated 14.1 million tonnes of waste. Of this, 4.2 million tonnes is primary waste, which is 17 percent of the total quantity of primary waste in Flanders. The other 9.9 million tonnes of waste comes from the waste processing sector and is therefore secondary waste. The share of trade & services in the total waste production in Flanders (industrial waste and household waste) is 40 percent.

In 2008, 34 percent (737 ktonnes) of the total quantity of hazardous waste in Flanders originated from trade & services. Of this, 252 ktonnes was primary waste and 485 ktonnes was secondary waste. The most important primary hazardous waste streams, as far as volume is concerned, are the emulsions of mineral oils and greases originating from, for example, garages and petrol stations. The major part of the secondary hazardous waste consists of bottom ash and fly ash originating from incineration installations and of waste from the physico-chemical treatment of waste products. 66 percent of the hazardous waste from trade & services originates from the waste processing sector. Hazardous waste can be created during the processing of non-hazardous waste.

Most waste is collected selectively

In 2009, 3.4 million tonnes of household waste were collected. That is an average of 7 kg per inhabitant more than the year before. In global terms, the quantity of household

waste remained fairly stable over the period 2000-2009. The target from the MINA plan 3+ (2008-2010), which states that the quantity of household waste per inhabitant must at least stay the same or decrease compared to 2000, was reached each year. The target for the quantity of residual waste was also reached: in 2009, for the first time, less than 150 kg per inhabitant of residual waste was collected.

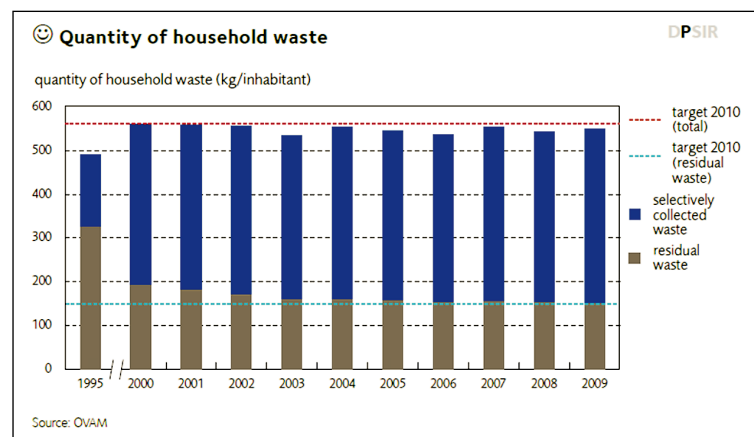
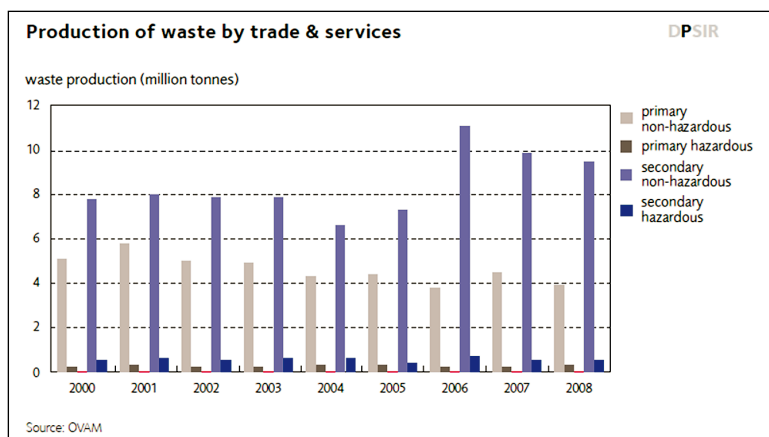
In 2009, 73 percent of the household waste was collected selectively, 1 percent more than in 2008. The target is to achieve a selective collection level of 75 percent by 2010 (Implementation Plan for the Environmentally Sound Management of Household Waste).

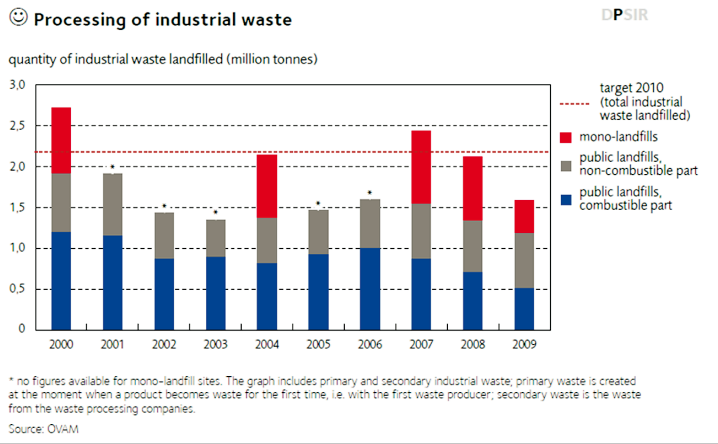
The largest selectively collected waste streams were garden waste (24 percent), construction and demolition waste (20 percent), paper and cardboard waste (19 percent) and vegetable, fruit and garden waste (10 percent). The quantity of vegetable, fruit and garden waste decreased almost continuously between 2000 and 2009. The quantity of garden waste on the other hand was fairly constant, fluctuating around an average of 83 kg per inhabitant. The quantity of paper and cardboard waste decreased continuously between 2002 and 2008. In 2009, this waste stream decreased by 3 percent. This was probably the consequence of a lower turnover in small independent traders who dispose of their paper and cardboard waste with the household waste.

Preventing waste is the first priority

Waste that cannot be prevented should be processed with the greatest possible respect for the environment. Reuse comes first, followed by recycling and composting. After that comes incineration with energy recovery. Landfill is the last option.

In 2009 nearly three quarters of the 3.4 million tonnes of household waste collected went to one form of recyc-



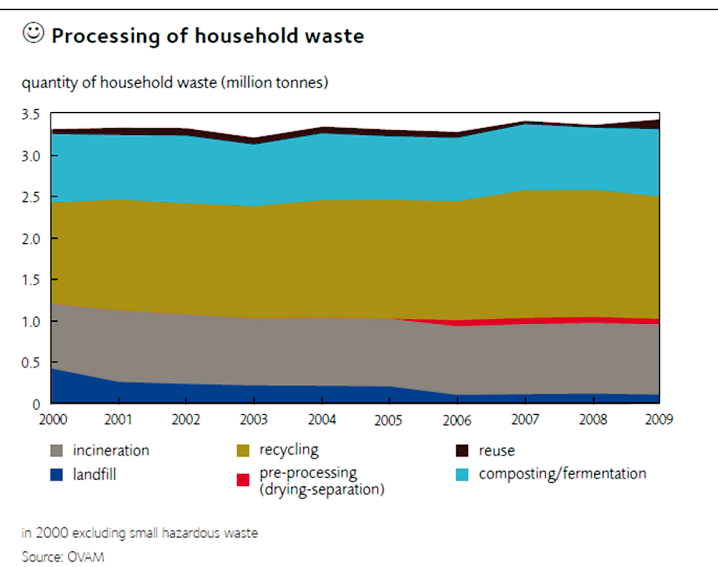


ling or another: Three percent went to reuse, 24 percent to composting or fermentation, 43 percent to recycling, and two percent to pre-processing (drying-separation). 25 percent of the household waste collected was incinerated. The major part of this was residual waste. Two percent was selectively collected waste, including contaminated wood waste and plastic waste.

Three percent of the household waste was transported to landfill sites. 70 percent of this was selectively collected waste, mainly asbestos-containing construction and demolition waste and construction and demolition waste for which, due to the composition or level of contamination, there was no recycling option available. The other 30 percent was residual waste, mainly non-combustible bulky waste.

More primary industrial waste

In 2008 companies produced 21.8 million tonnes of primary industrial waste. According to MINA plan 3+ (2008-2010), the amount of primary industrial waste must decrease with respect to 2002 by 2010 and must lag behind economic growth. Although there was less primary industrial waste produced in 2008 than the year before, the quantity was still higher than in 2002.



Roughly half of the primary industrial waste is construction and demolition waste, soil and waste from (waste) water treatment. When these flows are left out of consideration, the quantity of primary industrial waste has remained fairly constant since 2000.

In 2008, 75 percent of the primary industrial waste came from industry, 19 percent from trade & services, five percent from the energy sector and one percent from agriculture. The combined quantity of primary waste from the industrial and energy sectors, excluding construction and demolition waste, soil and waste from (waste) water treatment, showed signs of a decrease over the period 1995-2008 and is therefore decoupled from economic growth in these sectors.

Less combustible industrial waste landfilled

In 2008, approximately half of primary industrial waste was sorted or pre-processed in some other way before being treated further. After two treatment steps, a roughly estimated 63 percent of primary industrial waste was recycled in some way (reuse, use as a secondary raw material, recycling or composting), 11 percent was incinerated and eight percent went to landfill. The other waste was pre-processed multiple times.

Between 2006 and 2009 the flow of primary and secondary industrial waste to public landfill sites decreased by a quarter. The proportion of combustible waste in this decreased from 62 percent to 43 percent. This is, among other things, the result of the changes in the levies on landfill and incineration on 1 January 2007. The largest combustible waste flows in 2009 were shredder waste (40 percent), mixed industrial waste (29 percent) and recycling residues (22 percent).

The quantity of non-combustible industrial waste at public landfill sites has remained almost constant since 2000. The decrease in the quantity of industrial waste at mono-landfill sites in 2008 and 2009 was largely the result of the financial-economic crisis.

Source: Flemish Environment Agency (VMM)

