



Rijkswaterstaat  
Ministry of Infrastructure and the  
Environment

Towards a circular economy

# Waste and Resources Management

In Europe, the Netherlands has established a leading position in waste management. Currently, 79% of our waste is recycled and the remaining part is mostly used for energy production. Although this is already a major achievement, the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe calls for a more fundamental transition. The long-term ambition is therefore to achieve a circular economy in the Netherlands. To meet this challenge, Rijkswaterstaat goes beyond traditional waste management by stimulating integrated waste prevention throughout product chains. What was once considered waste can thus be converted into a resource. This creates new economic opportunities and enhances resource security.

## Organisation

Rijkswaterstaat is the executive body of the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. It manages the main infrastructural networks and implements environmental policies in the Netherlands. The organisation consists of several departments. The department 'Water, Transport and Environment' supports authorities in developing and implementing sustainable policies for water and soil management, mobility, spatial planning and climate mitigation. Within this department, the sector 'Materials and Environment' is responsible for waste management. Rijkswaterstaat has offices on several locations in the Netherlands and a staff of over 9,000 employees.

## Policy Framework

In 2008, the EU Waste Framework Directive reinforced the waste hierarchy, which prioritises prevention, reuse and recycling of waste. To reach a higher level of resource efficiency, the 7th Environmental

Action Plan urges Member States to move towards a circular economy and specifically focuses on hazardous waste, economic instruments and removing market barriers for recycling. The national policy framework in the Netherlands reflects the ambitions of the European Commission. The main objective of the National Waste Management Plan is to prevent and reduce waste streams, but also to minimise the environmental impact of waste treatment and product chains through integrated chain management.

## Policy Advice and Implementation

Rijkswaterstaat advises the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment regarding the development and evaluation of national and European waste policies and regulations. Expert advice is provided in many different ways. For instance, Rijkswaterstaat assists in drafting policies and action programmes, represents the Ministry in European expert groups and moderates implementation disputes.





Rijkswaterstaat also implements national and European waste policies and regulations, such as the Dutch Packaging Decree, the EU Waste Framework Directive and Ecodesign Directive. To promote sustainable production and consumption, Rijkswaterstaat helps companies interpret end-of-waste and by-product concepts formulated by the EU and it stimulates green public procurement.

Rijkswaterstaat also provides advice to companies and local authorities how to comply with (inter)national waste policies and regulations. To this end, Rijkswaterstaat develops information tools, such as a benchmark on waste separation to assess the performance of municipalities.

### Monitoring and Research

To evaluate policy effectiveness, Rijkswaterstaat monitors quantities and characteristics of waste streams, transboundary movement, waste treatment activities and (inter)national market developments. Rijkswaterstaat also coordinates monitoring activities of various organisations and compiles the results in a central database. The generated data is analysed to deliver monitoring reports for the Dutch government and the EU (Eurostat), and to develop indicators and scenarios.

To formulate sound and reliable policy advice, Rijkswaterstaat performs research itself (e.g. life cycle analyses), contracts external experts or analyses third party research. Rijkswaterstaat also regularly consults private and public stakeholders to take into account their views and experiences. Different methods are used for stakeholder consultation, such as participatory workshops and network meetings. Rijkswaterstaat thus bridges the gap between policy and practice and facilitates knowledge exchange.

### International Activities and Network

Rijkswaterstaat maintains good relationships with a number of (environmental/waste) agencies and knowledge institutes, particularly within Europe. Furthermore, Rijkswaterstaat contributes to capacity-building both within and outside of Europe, to improve waste management. For instance through International Public Cooperation and Government-to-Government projects. Rijkswaterstaat also takes part in several (EU) research programmes, international platforms and working groups. It is the National Reference Centre in the European Environment Information and Observation Network and the national contact point for the United Nations Environment Programme.

### Helpdesk

In order to support local authorities and businesses in sustainable waste management Rijkswaterstaat runs an information desk, which can be reached by telephone (+31) (0)88 ~~602 79 79~~-7972949.

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For more general information about Rijkswaterstaat visit:  
[www.rijkswaterstaat.nl/en](http://www.rijkswaterstaat.nl/en)

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