

23 November 2022

Modified on 23 December

**Other environmental accounts: Waste accounts
Year 2020**

The Spanish economy generated 105.6 million tonnes of waste in 2020, 20.7% less than the previous year

A total of 54.7% of the waste treated was destined for recycling, 12.3 points more than in 2019 and 16.4 more than in 2015

Generation of waste in the Spanish economy¹

The Spanish economy generated 105.6 million tonnes of waste in 2020, 20.7% less than the previous year. Of these, 3.3 million corresponded to hazardous waste (0.1% less than in 2019) and 102.3 million to non-hazardous waste (21.3% less).

Waste generated by type of waste². Year 2020

Units: thousands of tonnes.

	Total	Interannual variation rate (%)	Non- hazardous	Interannual variation rate (%)	Hazardous	Interannual variation rate (%)
Waste generated	105,624.4	-20.7	102,319.6	-21.3	3,304.8	-0.1
Mineral	41,786.4	-37.7	41,301.2	-37.9	485.2	-11.2
Mixed materials	36,251.0	-3.4	36,161.7	-3.4	89.4	-3.3
Animal and vegetal	9,102.6	-1.4	9,102.6	-1.4	..	..
Metallic	5,728.2	-8.5	5,728.2	-8.5	..	..
Paper and cardboard	4,288.9	1.8	4,288.9	1.8	..	..
Chemical	2,517.3	6.6	1,028.0	4.1	1,489.3	8.3
Discarded equipment	1,476.9	0.1	274.6	28.6	1,202.3	-4.7
Glass	1,226.7	-3.6	1,226.7	-3.6	0.0	-12.2
Wood	994.3	-8.7	993.4	-8.7	0.9	-6.5
Common sludges	878.6	-34.3	878.6	-34.3	..	..
Plastic	876.8	-6.1	876.8	-6.1	..	..
Others	496.6	-2.3	458.8	-3.6	37.8	17.0

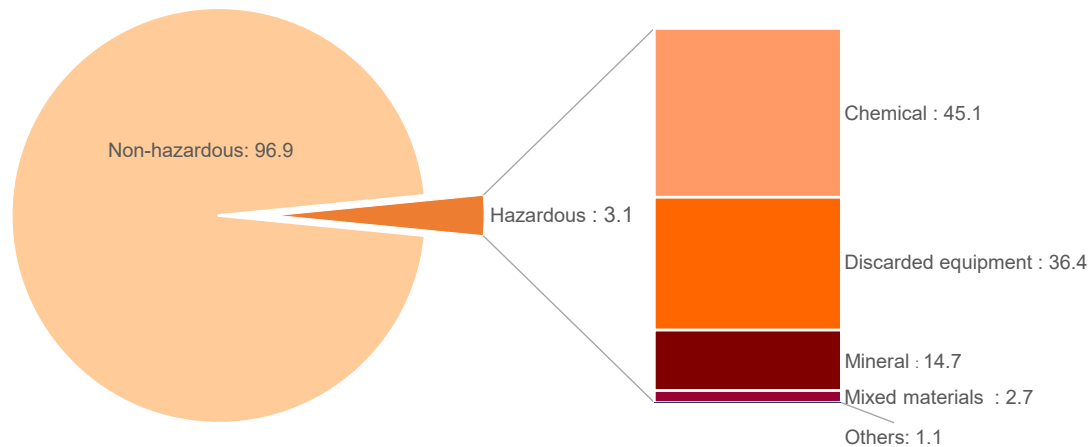
¹ A greater detail of the waste generated in the urban sphere can be consulted in the press release of the Statistics on the Collection and Treatment of Waste published today by the INE.

² The symbol “..” indicates the categories of waste not covered by Regulation (EC) No 2150/2002.

The most relevant categories of waste generated were *Mineral wastes* (41.8 million tonnes), *Mixed wastes* (36.3 million tonnes) and *Animal and vegetal wastes* (9.1 million tonnes).

In 2020, 96.9% of the waste generated was non-hazardous and 3.1% was hazardous. Of the total hazardous waste generated, 45.1% corresponded to *Chemical wastes*, 36.4% to *Discarded equipment* and 14.7% to *Mineral wastes*.

Waste generated in the Spanish economy (percentage). Year 2020



Generation of waste by activity sectors and households

78.7% of waste generated in 2020 corresponded to the *Activity Sectors* and 21.3% to *Households*.

The activities that experienced the greatest reductions were *Industry* (57.6% less) and *Services* (10.0% less). On the other hand, the generation of waste increased by 2.4% in *Agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing*.

On the other hand, *Households* as consumers generated 1.2% less waste.

Waste generated by activity sectors and households. Year 2020

Units: thousands of tonnes.

	Total	Variation rate (%)	Non-hazardous	Variation rate (%)	Hazardous	Variation rate (%)
Total	105,624.4	-20.7	102,319.6	-21.3	3,304.8	-0.1
Construction	32,542.6	-7.1	32,457.8	-7.1	84.7	-6.6
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	21,941.5	-8.3	21,170.1	-8.9	771.4	11.8
Industry (Including mining and energy production)	16,450.5	-57.6	15,249.2	-59.5	1,201.3	0.7
Agriculture, livestock breeding, forestry and fishing	6,330.7	2.4	6,302.4	2.3	28.2	8.9
Services	5,849.8	-10.0	4,697.6	-10.0	1,152.2	-9.7
Households	22,509.3	-1.2	22,442.4	-1.4	66.9	100.9

By type of waste, the ones that had the greatest weight in those generated by *Households* were *Mixed Waste* (81.8% of the total), *Paper and Cardboard* (5.8%), *Animal and Vegetable Waste* (5.4%) and *Glass* (3.6%).

On the other hand, the main wastes generated by the *Activity Sectors* were *Mineral wastes* (49.8% of the total) and *Mixed wastes* (21.6%).

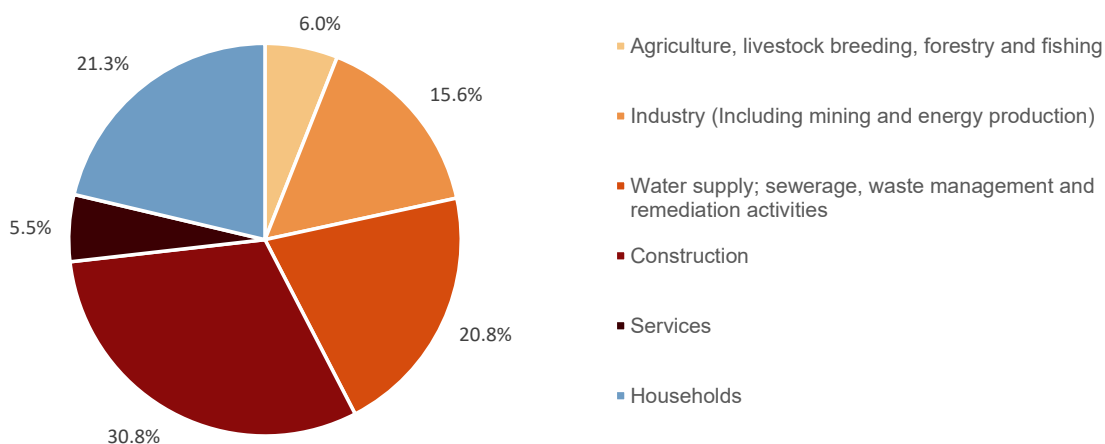
Types of wastes generated by activity sectors and households. Year 2020

Units: thousands of tonnes.

	Total	% of the total	Activity sectors	% of the total	Households	% of the total
Waste generated	105,624.4	100.0	83,115.0	100.0	22,509.3	100.0
Mineral	41,786.4	39.4	41,365.4	49.8	421.0	1.8
Mixed materials	36,251.0	34.3	17,944.0	21.6	18,307.1	81.3
Animal and vegetal	9,102.6	8.6	7,849.4	9.4	1,253.2	5.6
Metallic	5,728.2	5.4	5,681.9	6.8	46.3	0.2
Paper and cardboard	4,288.9	4.0	2,948.9	3.5	1,340.0	5.9
Chemical	2,517.3	2.4	2,512.9	3.0	4.4	0.0
Discarded equipment	1,476.9	1.4	1,372.3	1.7	104.6	0.4
Glass	1,226.7	1.2	397.8	0.5	828.9	3.7
Wood	994.3	0.9	844.5	1.0	149.7	0.7
Common sludges	878.6	0.8	878.6	1.1	..	..
Plastic	876.8	0.8	862.6	1.0	14.3	0.1
Others	496.6	0.5	456.6	0.5	40.0	0.2

The activities that generated the greatest amount of waste in 2020 were *Construction* (30.8% of the total) and *Water supply, sanitation, waste management and decontamination* (20.8%).

Waste generated by activity sectors and households (percentage). Year 2020



Types of wastes generated by activity sectors. Year 2020

Units: thousands of tonnes.

	Total sectors	Construction	Water supply; sewerage, waste management ...	Industry (Including mining and energy production)	Agriculture, livestock breeding, forestry and fishing	Services
Waste generated	83,115.0	32,542.6	21,941.5	16,450.5	6,330.7	5,849.8
Mineral	41,365.4	32,214.6	1,006.1	8,054.9	13.1	76.7
Mixed materials	17,944.0	44.9	15,543.8	1,136.1	397.8	821.4
Animal and vegetal	7,849.4	29.3	36.0	1,434.8	5,778.8	570.5
Metallic	5,681.9	86.7	3,163.6	1,992.6	9.0	430.0
Paper and cardboard	2,948.9	45.9	239.6	874.3	14.5	1,774.6
Chemical	2,512.9	9.5	649.5	1,659.5	32.8	161.6
Discarded equipment	1,372.3	12.7	207.8	27.7	7.7	1,116.4
Common sludges	878.6	2.9	587.3	277.5	5.2	5.8
Plastic	862.6	22.8	268.3	268.4	39.9	263.2
Wood	844.5	65.8	62.5	516.3	20.3	179.7
Others	456.6	2.0	11.6	82.8	10.4	349.8
Glass	397.8	5.6	165.3	125.6	1.2	100.1

By sectors, Mineral waste was mainly caused by Construction (32.2 million tons, 7.1% less than in 2019) and Industry (8.1 million tons, 73.7% less). Mixed Wastes by Water Supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (15.5 million, 6.8% less than the previous year).

On the other hand, Animal and Vegetable Waste was generated for the most part by Agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing (5.8 million tons, 1.7% more than in 2019).

Annual variation rates of waste generated by activity sectors. Year 2020

Units: percentage

	Total sectors	Construction	Water supply; sewerage, waste management ...	Industry (Including mining and energy production)	Agriculture, livestock breeding, forestry and fishing	Services
Waste generated	-24.8	-7.1	-8.3	-57.6	2.4	-10.0
Mineral	-37.8	-7.1	-12.2	-73.7	4.8	-8.3
Mixed materials	-5.3	-8.0	-6.8	20.2	12.2	-11.0
Animal and vegetal	-2.6	-7.6	89.5	-13.9	1.7	-13.7
Metallic	-9.0	-7.8	-14.4	1.5	4.7	-10.2
Paper and cardboard	0.8	-7.8	12.4	29.0	5.8	-10.0
Chemical	6.6	-6.9	18.4	4.8	9.0	-12.4
Discarded equipment	-2.9	-4.5	10.9	-13.7	4.1	-4.8
Common sludges	-34.3	-6.5	-42.9	-5.3	8.3	-20.5
Plastic	-3.5	-8.1	-1.9	5.9	10.8	-14.0
Wood	-11.0	-8.5	11.6	-14.3	-4.7	-9.2
Others	-1.0	-4.8	48.7	6.3	4.0	-3.7
Glass	8.3	-8.2	93.6	-0.8	9.1	-32.4

Final waste treatment in the Spanish economy

Of the 106.1 million tonnes of waste generated in 2020, final waste treatment companies³ handled 86.4 million tonnes, which was 25.4% less than in the previous year.

Specifically, they treated 84.2 million tonnes of non-hazardous waste (25.9% less than in 2019) and 2.2 million tonnes of hazardous waste (1.0% less).

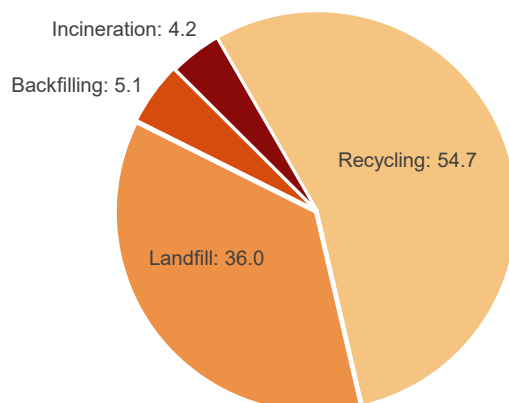
Final waste treatment. Year 2020

Units: thousands of tonnes.

Waste treatment (by type of treatment)	Quantity	Interannual variation rate (%)
Total waste treatment	86,411.2	-25.4
Non-hazardous	84,230.3	-25.9
Hazardous	2,180.8	-1.0
Recycling	47,277.1	-3.7
Non-hazardous	45,721.1	-3.9
Hazardous	1,556.0	1.2
Landfill	31,147.9	-35.5
Non-hazardous	30,657.6	-35.8
Hazardous	490.3	-2.3
Incineration	3,548.0	-9.8
Non-hazardous	3,413.4	-9.4
Hazardous	134.6	-18.2
Backfilling	4,438.2	-69.5
Non-hazardous	4,438.2	-69.5
Hazardous	..	..

Of the total waste treated, 36.0% ended up in landfill, 54.7% was recycled, 5.1% was reused in backfilling operations and 4.2% was incinerated.

Final waste treatment (percentage). Year 2020



³ Only final treatments are included. The primary differences between the waste generated and that treated, as published in the Waste Account, are due, among other reasons, to exclusively accounting for final treatments, foreign trade in waste (imports and exports) and the differences in volume between the time when waste is generated and when it is finally treated.

Recycled waste

The percentage of recycled waste out of total waste treated increased 16.4 points between 2015 and 2020, going from 38.3% to 54.7%.

Recycled waste. 2015-2020 Series

Units: thousands of tonnes.

	Quantity	% of total waste treated	Interannual variation rate (%)
2015	41,279.9	38.3	
2016	39,581.4	37.1	-4.1
2017	44,921.8	38.9	13.5
2018	47,245.1	38.7	5.2
2019	49,109.8	42.4	3.9
2020	47,277.1	54.7	-3.7

In 2020, 47.3 million tonnes of waste were recycled, 3.7% less than in 2019. Of this figure, 50.4% corresponded to *Mineral wastes*, 18.2% to *Metallic wastes*, and 9.0% to *Paper and cardboard*.

The recycled waste with the highest growth rates was *Discarded Equipment* (30.9%), *Mixed Waste* (16.0%) and *Animal and Vegetable Waste* (11.6%). For its part, *Wood Wastes* declined by 70.0% compared to 2019.

Recycling by waste category. Year 2020

Units: thousands of tonnes.

Recycled waste (by type)	Recycling	% of the total	Interannual variation rate (%)
TOTAL	47,277.1	100.0	-3.7
Mineral	23,822.2	50.4	1.4
Metallic	8,613.8	18.2	-16.1
Paper and cardboard	4,242.4	9.0	8.6
Mixed materials	4,200.0	8.9	16.0
Animal and vegetal	1,987.2	4.2	11.6
Chemical	1,106.8	2.3	-10.5
Glass	1,061.4	2.3	-18.1
Discarded equipment	628.7	1.3	30.9
Plastic	568.6	1.2	-21.3
Common sludges	553.5	1.2	-49.9
Wood	295.3	0.6	-70.0
Others	197.1	0.4	-7.1

Data Review and Update

The data published today are final. The results are available at INEBase.

Methodological note

The objective of the Environmental Accounts (EA) is to integrate environmental information into the central system of National Accounts in a coherent way. They include a set of satellite accounts, which are transmitted annually, compiled using the accounting formats applicable to the different sectoral and territorial areas, with a strong use of physical data.

The Waste Accounts are useful for organising information on the generation of waste and the management of its flows to recycling facilities, backfilling operations, incineration and controlled landfills. From this information, important indicators can be obtained to measure the pressure that the economy exerts on the environment. They also make it possible to monitor the objectives of waste reduction policies and evaluate improvements in management for the recovery of materials.

The study of waste includes the generation and treatment of waste in accordance with the guidelines established in Regulation (EC) 2150/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November on waste statistics, as amended by Regulation (EU) 849/2010.

The INE annually carries out the Statistics on Generation, Collection and Treatment of Waste with the aim of quantifying the origin and treatment thereof. This information, together with information from other bodies, mainly that provided by the Ministry of Ecological Transition, provides the basis for the preparation of the Waste Accounts.

For more information, the methodology can be accessed at:

https://ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736177062&menu=metodologia&idp=1254735976603

The standardized methodological report is at:

<https://ine.es/dynt3/metadatos/es/RespuestaDatos.html?oe=30095>

INE statistics are produced in accordance with the Code of Good Practice for European Statistics, which is the basis for the institution's quality policy and strategy. For more information see the section on [Quality at INE and the Code of Best Practices](#) on the INE webpage.

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