*Annual report 2020*

# An overview of an exceptional year

Recupel

# In 2020, we collected 123,840 tonnes of discarded light bulbs and electrical and electronic equipment. An absolute record. Thank you!


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# Four questions for Eric Dewaet

In July 2020, Eric Dewaet started as CEO of Recupel. Dewaet brings extensive experience in supply chain management, which he accrued at VIL (the innovation cluster for logistics in Flanders) and Hospital Logistics, and other companies. Eric Dewaet sat for the camera to talk about his starting during turbulent times, the successes of the team and its partners, and future challenges

## Who is Eric Dewaet?

Eric Dewaet holds master's degrees in mining engineering and industrial policy from KU Leuven. In his career, he has accumulated almost 30 years of experience in supply chain management.

### You were appointed CEO in July 2020 in the middle of the coronavirus crisis. How did that go?

**Eric Dewaet:** 'I was fortunate that the coronavirus measures were a little more relaxed in the summer. So, I was able to physically meet all of the Recupel staff. I was quite taken by their commitment and drive. There are some 30 employees in our team and they are all aware of and very passionate about Recupel's social role. Our service has also continued to run smoothly with teleworking thanks to their professionalism. This is an adjustment that should not be underestimated, not only for us but also for our partners who help us with the collection, transport, and processing of electronic waste.'

'During the lockdown, many collection points, such as shops and recycling parks, were closed and this initially led to some calmer periods. Our partners made good use of this to prepare for telework or organise the workplace so it is safe. We were in very close contact with our partners to coordinate the fluctuations in the volumes collected due to the closure and reopening of collection points. This helped us solve problems quickly. During the lockdown, many garages, garden sheds, houses, and attics were tidied up. Our partners pulled out all the stops to handle the increased volume. We are very grateful to them for that.'

### What achievements in 2020 are you proud of?

'Despite the difficult conditions, together with our partners, we again collected a record amount of light bulbs and electrical and electronic equipment. This is a fantastic achievement given that 2019 was also a record year. We can also be proud of our recycling achievements. For years, these amounts have been well above the European targets for the recycling of discarded light bulbs and electrical and electronic equipment.'

'We also worked hard on positioning the Recupel brand. Together with various stakeholders, we have refocused on what Recupel stands for and how we can best present this to the outside world. The first articulation of this is our latest campaign on light bulbs and light fixtures. In fact, our team was able to complete many of the planned projects in 2020 despite the coronavirus crisis. A terrific achievement.'

### What is on the agenda for the coming years?

'We are always raising the bar. We want to collect and recycle even more. In particular, the recovery of critical metals from discarded electrical and electronic equipment will become even more important in the years to come. Starting in 2018, we have also been experimenting with artificial intelligence to better sort devices and recycle them more efficiently in the future. We're going to expand that even further.'

'To encourage reuse, we're also working with HERW!N and Ressources to encourage the recovery and reuse of electronic devices. We set up joint campaigns to encourage people to give devices that still work to a friend or acquaintance or take them to a second-hand shop. We now also have a new, interactive tool on the website that informs people of their rights and options with respect to having broken devices repaired.'

### What challenges do you face?

'Like most European countries, Belgium did not meet the European collection targets. The target required all EU Member States to collect 65% of the average weight of what was placed on the market in the previous three years, or 85% of what was discarded, by 2019. Belgium is now at just over 50%. Of this, 20% slip through the wrong channels, such as household waste and scrap metal. We also don't know what happens to 30% of it. To resolve this, we'll have to join forces even more with all stakeholders.'

'The diversity of technologies is also a challenge. At the moment, we receive a wide range of devices, from old cathode ray tubes with lead in the glass to plasma televisions. New technologies are also coming in all the time. Each of these also has its own risks. For example, flammable lithium batteries in laptops and smartphones. We work closely with our recycling partners to recycle all of these different technologies.'

'But, I'm hopeful. A generation is growing up that is more aware of the importance of a circular economy, reuse, and recycling. I'm convinced that the young people of today will push hard for the circular economy.'

'Our partners pulled out all the stops last year to handle large volumes. We are very grateful to them for that.'

# 2020 was an exceptional year in every aspect.

The coronavirus crisis and the lockdown in the spring of 2020 did not reduce the amount of e-waste collected.

In 2020, the amount of our collection increased by 1.1%. Each Belgian resident brought an average of 10.8 kg to a Recupel point. So, we did better than in 2019, which was already an absolute record year. However, the coronavirus crisis caused a bumpy start because many collection points had to close.

But as soon as the measures were relaxed, collection peaked: up to 50% more collection in June 2020 compared to June 2019. The most striking results were a 4.2% increase in fridges and freezers and 2 million more units in the 'Other' category (mainly smaller electronic devices) than in 2019. Belgians took advantage of the lockdown to tidy up. That we reflexively bring in e-waste for recycling and reuse is the result of the efforts made in recent years.

## Our collection results

*122,548 tonnes (2019)*

**123,840 tonnes**
*collected in 2020*
**That is an increase of 1.1%**

Examining the **volume (in tonnes)** by category, we see:

| | 2019 | 2020 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Large white goods | 31,235 | 32,148 | +2.92% |
| Fridges and freezers | 20,381 (2018) | 21,246 | +4.24% |
| Light bulbs | 1,473 | 1,282 | -12.94% |
| Other (eg. mobile phones) | 51,724 | 53,208 | +2.87% |
| Smoke alarms | 15 | 16 | +6.57% |
| Televisions | 12,024 | 11,330 | -5.78% |
| Professional appliances | 5,695 | 4,611 | -19% |

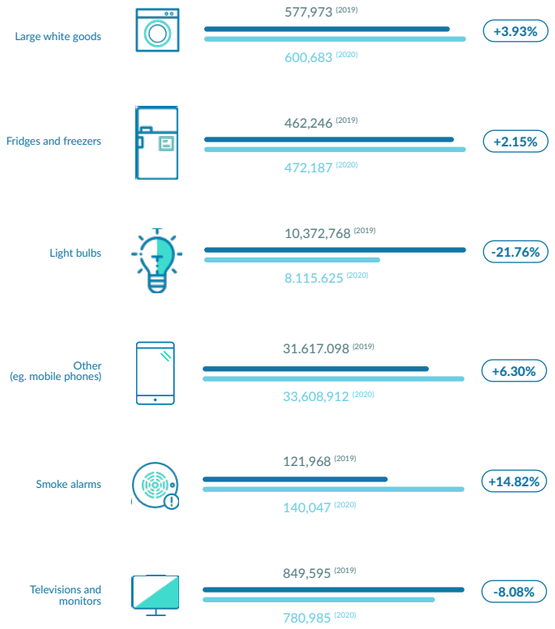
*44,001,648 (2019)*

## 43.7 million devices

*collected in 2020*

**That is a decrease of 0,64%**

Although the weight collected increased, the number of devices collected decreased slightly by 0.64% compared to 2019.
Examining **the units** by category, we see:




The result is largely due to a decrease in the number of light bulbs collected, specifically from companies and contractors. In 2020, they carried out far fewer projects to replace old lighting with more efficient LED lamps. We expect this trend to continue as long-life LED lamps are increasingly being used.

# Our recycling results

## 92.7% of e-waste gets a useful application

That is a 2% increase compared to last year. Last year, our processors recycled 79.6% of waste into usable raw materials. Another 13.1% was burned to generate useful energy.

| All recycling results | FERROUS MATERIALS | NON-FERROUS MATERIALS | PLASTICS | OTHER MATERIALS | CATEGORY RESULTS | LEGAL OBJECTIVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LARGE WHITE GOODS** (for example washing machines) | 100% | 99.9% | 96.40% | 69.60% | **92.10%** | **85%** |
| **FRIDGES AND FREEZERS** | 100% | 100% | 99.50% | 91% | **99.30%** | **85%** |
| **LIGHT BULBS** | 100% | 98.90% | 100% | 95.70% | **95.90%** | **80%** |
| **OTHER** (for example mobiles phones) | 99.90% | 99.90% | 93.60% | 67.10% | **91.10%** | **80%** |
| **TELEVISIONS AND MONITORS** | 100% | 100% | 95.50% | 46.10% | **89%** | **80%** |
| **RESULTS PER MATERIAL STREAM** | **100%** | **99.98%** | **95.90%** | **68.80%** | | |
| **LEGAL OBJECTIVES** | **95%** | **95%** | **80%** | | | |

We have exceeded the European recycling targets year after year including in 2020. Moreover, for each type of material and each category, we score better than or just as good as last year.

## Belgium collection rate

In 2018, Recupel was a co-founder of the non-profit organisation BeWeee. Actors in the entire e-waste chain use this tool to report how many electrical devices they bring onto the market, collect, or process, and what their destination is. In the meantime, reporting via the tool has quadrupled from 6,662 tonnes in 2017 to 28,554 tonnes in 2019. Including the figures that Recupel reports, we arrive at a total of 151,102 tonnes for 2019.

This is an important step towards the European objective of collecting 65% of the devices that enter the Belgium market (by weight). Clearly, with a collection rate of 51% in 2019, we still have work to do. However, the 5% progress made compared to 2017 shows that we are on the right track. The results of BeWeee for the year 2020 are currently not yet available. The collection rate for the year 2020 will be published on the BeWeee website.

# Our collection network

## 548 recycling parks

Recycling parks are the hub of our network of collecti-on points. There are 548 locations across the country.

## 24 reuse centres

Devices that are no longer used, but still work, can be dropped off at a reuse centre. They carry out the necessary repairs and prepare the devices on-site for sale in a second-hand shop. In 2020, Recupel collaborated with 24 reuse centres.

## 11,612 collection points

Collection points can be found in shops selling electrical and electronic devices. They are required by law to take back old similar devices from customers for processing and are thus a logical collection location. A total of 11,612 merchants have registered as collection points. Of these, 2,912 also have a Recycle Point, which are handy containers where you can dispose of small light bulbs and electrical and electronic equipment.

## 87 charter collectors or charter recyclers

Companies can engage Recupel's recycling companies directly to process their discarded electrical and electronic equipment. In 2020, our network comprised 87 partners: 76 charter collectors and 11 charter recyclers.

# Our impact in 2020

We accomplished a lot in spite of a year of lockdowns, telework, and web meetings. Let us look back on the highlights of 2020 with lots of gratitude and pride.

## Generation R

We launched the Generation R campaign to encourage all Belgians to pass on their garden and work tools (**Reuse**), have them fixed up (**Refurbish and Repair**), or collected for Recycling. Recupel's biennial survey shows that there are no less than 4.8 million unused tools in our garden sheds and garages. This is good for 14,000 tonnes of iron and 2,000 tonnes of copper. These are raw materials that are becoming increasingly scarce and perfectly recyclable. More than 80% of unused devices still work and only have to find their way to a new user. Of the rest, we can get iron that in weight is equivalent to 28 fully fuelled aeroplanes. In addition, we get copper that in weight is equivalent to one and a half Statues of Liberty.

## Online repair tool

This is a new online tool on our website that allows consumers to find out what their rights and options are for giving broken devices a new life. By answering simple multiple-choice questions, they get tailored advice on their devices' warranties and find out where to go for repairs. We also provide them with useful addresses for devices with an expired warranty.

## New brand positioning

Together with our stakeholders, we worked out a new brand and communication strategy over the past year. The first result of this thought exercise is our campaign on the collection of light bulbs and light fixtures. To this end, we engaged cartoonist-comedians Philippe Geluck and Jeroom. They put the spotlight on the memories we owe to our light bulbs and the beautiful moments we will have with the raw materials we recover from them.

Recupel is responsible for collecting gas discharge lamps (such as energy-saving bulbs and fluorescent lamps), LED lamps, and light fixtures. These contain recyclable materials, such as glass and fluorescent powder as well as harmful substances, such as mercury, which must be handled safely. Almost 15% of our light bulbs are unintentionally discarded in household waste, bulky waste, or glass containers. With the help of Geluck and Jeroom, we encourage people to bring in those light bulbs.

# Artificial Intelligence project in 2020

Since 2018, we have been working with IDLab, an imec research group at the University of Antwerp, on a project to recognise and catalogue collected devices using artificial intelligence. Over the past year, we were able to refine the system. The pilot project was also extended to a second site in Les Hautes Ardennes. At the same time, we started tests to make the system use a conveyor belt instead of manually placing the devices on the sampling station. This improves how smaller devices are weighed and photographed.

# Partnerships in coronavirus times

The circular economy requires the work of many hands. For example, for years, we have set up collection campaigns with GoodPlanet, Natuurpunt, and others. Smooth collaboration is indispensable for Recupel's operation especially in the coronavirus epoch. In 2020, we organised a large online meeting in Brussels for the first time to strengthen the collaboration between the different links in the recycling chain. From collectors and transporters to sector organisations, everyone coming into contact with discarded electrical and electronic equipment received instructions and was given the opportunity to ask questions.

Recupel is also active internationally as a part of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Forum. Every year on 14 October, we organise International E-Waste Day together with various countries. Last year, we were one of the pioneers in the WEEE Flows study that compared the collection rates in different countries.

# In conversation with our partners

## HERW!N & Ressources

> **Electrical and electronic equipment is one of the fastest growing waste streams worldwide. So, there's still a huge potential. We need to shift to a system where the different actors collaborate much more closely together.**
>
> Joren Verschaeve, HERW!N

> **With Recupel's help, we will continue to collaborate with manufacturers and large chains to increase the number of donations of discarded devices for reuse.**
>
> Francine Beya, Ressources

### Why is it so important to focus on recovery and reuse?

**Francine Beya (Ressources):** 'When you recycle goods, there is usually a loss of value because you cannot, for instance, valorise all of the components. This is the well-known concept known as Lansink's Ladder *(the idea that you give priority to the most environmental-friendly processing methods, ed.)*. But it is also a response to our consumer society, which encourages us to buy new things all the time.'

**Joren Verschaeve (HERW!N):** 'The social aspect of recovery and reuse is also part of this. You can see this very clearly with electrical and electronic equipment. People in disadvantaged circumstances often cannot afford a new washing machine. But they can get one at a second-hand shop. Collecting, sorting, and repairing these devices are also labour-intensive processes. So, reuse provides many jobs, especially for people who have a hard time entering the labour market. This is how second-hand shops fulfil a dual social role.'

### How many jobs does the social economy create in Belgium?

**Beya:** 'In Wallonia and Brussels, we are talking about 7,800 people, but at different levels: contractual workers, volunteers, and people in training. In terms of full-time equivalents, we are talking about 2,300.'

**Verschaeve:** 'There are many different types of work and work contracts, but you can say that about 50,000 people in Flanders work in the social economy in one way or another. Specifically, for second-hand shops, it is about 6,000 people. According to our research, there are actually twice as many people eligible for jobs in the social economy, but we do not currently have the resources for this.'

### How long have you worked with Recupel?

**Verschaeve:** 'I would say from the very beginning. The recycling centres were already doing selective collection in the 1980s. That process was formalised when Recupel was founded. Collaboration agreements were drawn up that determined which devices were accepted, how figures were reported, and so on.'

**Beya:** 'Our collaboration dates back to 1999, but it was less structured then. By the way, the creation of our federation came from our members' desire to determine whether there was room for the social economy within Recupel's system. The signing of the framework agreement in 2006 transformed our collaboration into a true partnership.'

### What is the share of electrical and electronic equipment in your operation?

**Beya:** 'In 2019, we collected 21,000 tonnes of devices. Less than 2,000 tonnes of this went to repair and reuse. The rest was recycled. This is partly due to people's reflex to immediately recycle broken devices rather than repairing them. With Recupel's help, we will continue to collaborate with

manufacturers and large chains to increase the number of donations of discarded devices for reuse.'

**Verschaeve:** 'As a rough estimate, 10% of what's collected by second-hand shops goes to recycling. This figure could be higher, but it is also partly due to the product group. For example, the parts of three broken washing machines are often combined into one working machine. Electrical and electronic equipment accounts for about 5% of our total turnover. That is an important share, but less than the traditional items, books, textiles, and furniture.'

### What is the consumer's attitude towards recycling today?

**Beya:** 'Our customers are very happy with their devices. On average, they acquire devices for only a third of the price even though the devices undergo an extensive quality check. This is not always the case when you buy things second hand. They also get a warranty on their purchase.'

**Verschaeve:** 'Many second-hand shops have grown out of the welfare movement. As I said, that's still an important role for us today: offering affordable goods to people who are not well off. We've also seen a growing group of consumers buying second-hand products based on ecological considerations. We believe this is a positive development. If we sell more, we can devote more resources to employment. The rising popularity also increases collection and ensures there's a supply of higher quality devices.'

### How do you see the reuse of electrical and electronic equipment evolving in the future?

**Beya:** 'The right to repair in the European Green Deal will encourage devices being repaired. We are already working on this with our Repair Cafés, where we teach consumers how to repair their own devices. At the same time, the market is evolving, for example, towards as-a-service models. Our role in this is limited for the time being: it's actually a commitment between manufacturer and customer. But we do follow up on it, so that our members are ready when the market changes.'

**Verschaeve:** 'Electrical and electronic equipment is one of the fastest growing waste streams worldwide. Today, in Belgium, we're already collecting more than 50%. So, there's still a huge potential that we want to explore. We need to shift to a system where the different actors collaborate much more closely together. For example, we see that manufacturers and retailers are increasingly engaging second-hand shops as a preliminary step toward training people in their repair workshops. Recupel can play an important role in that chain approach.'

## What does Ressources do?

Ressources represents social and circular businesses in Wallonia and Brussels and supports innovation, professionalisation, and digitisation in the circular economy. It provides legal assistance to its members and negotiates on their behalf with policy makers and partners, such as Recupel.

## What does HERW!N do?

HERW!N is a collective of more than 100 social circular businesses in Flanders, including second-hand shops. It represents its members in joint committees and with policy makers. It is also responsible for communicating with the general public. HERW!N consults with Recupel and reports back to them on the collection figures of its members.

# BD Logistics

> Sustainability is part of both of our DNA.
>
> Kristof Gouvaerts, BD Logistics

### How did the collaboration between BD Logistics and Recupel come about?

**Kristof Gouvaerts:** 'We are very natural partners. On the one hand, BD Logistics specialises in the fine-meshed logistics of large goods. We deliver furniture, refrigerators, washing machines, and so on, directly to people's homes and do installations if necessary. So, we're well equipped to do the reverse for Recupel as well: collect large discarded electrical and electronic equipment from collection points in the city. On the other hand, sustainability is part of both of our DNA. We do this in the first place by bringing together flows of goods at the edge of the city. This is how we limit the logistics kilometres driven within the city. We also do this as ecologically as possible. We have a modular fleet that includes bicycle couriers, electric and CNG vehicles ...'

'The collection of discarded electrical and electronic equipment was new to us and it requires extra attention. Our logistics team normally loads and unloads pallets. What we do for Recupel is much less standardised and has more legal obligations. You have to invest in the right resources and train your people well, so they can work safely and in an ergonomically correct manner. It's not an easy task, but that's not what we are looking for. BD Logistics provides logistics with added value.'

### How is the collaboration going?

'It's going really well. Recupel is a small dynamic team and we like that. There's a very short communication line between both organisations and we interact very openly with each other. This makes it easy for us to raise any issues and to act quickly when it comes to finding solutions. We don't have to deal with cumbersome administration, but work together smoothly and informally.'

### How does BD Logistics strive for sustainability?

'We view sustainability from both an ecological and a social perspective. Using an open ecosystem, we collaborate with various parties: sheltered workshops, bicycle couriers, etc. For example, we collaborate with the sheltered workshop Manus to collect electrical and electronic equipment. They sort the goods and prepare them for bulk transport.

## What does BD Logistics do?

BD Logistics provides logistics with added value and uses a finely meshed network of depots and transport modes throughout Belgium. For Recupel, they take care of the collection of electrical and electronic equipment in the Brussels Capital Region.

In Mechelen, we collaborate with WerKans. They help people enter the labour market. We're now also setting up a sheltered workshop department within BD Logistics. However, this will be a long process.'

'Mobility is also an important factor in our business. To this end, we are committed to a modular fleet. For short distances, we work with bicycle couriers. In the city centre, we also work with electric delivery vans. For slightly longer distances, we switch to CNG and we work with HVO for the large pallets. This is a type of biodiesel based on organic residues. Combined with our strategy of bringing goods together at the edge of the city, this reduces our $CO_2$ emissions by 75%.'

### Do you plan to fully electrify your fleet?

'We no longer order a vehicle unless it is sustainable. We would prefer to switch to electric or hybrid as soon as possible. We are also closely monitoring developments in that market, but for now, the investment is still considerable and the vehicles we want to buy are not always available. Electric lorries in particular are still in the early stages. Early this year, we expanded our green fleet with some e-Crafters. For us, these are particularly suited to the city centre and for 80 to 90 km routes. We also see that our customers are increasingly being pushed in that direction by their shareholders and other stakeholders. For example, in Ghent, you can only enter the city using a sustainable vehicle.'

### Do you also see a future using other forms of transport for the collection of discarded devices?

'I really believe in the potential of water transport. Of course, it's not immediately usable for our fine-meshed logistics. But we already using sea containers to transport our sorted goods by road. It can be transported perfectly well using the inland waterway or also by rail. We also take this into account when looking for a depot location: at the edge of the city and along the water. For example, our CityDepot in Hasselt is located close to the Albert Canal. In this case, the final processor must also be located by a canal or railway. At the moment, this is not often the case. I think there is an opportunity here for Recupel and they are open to it. That's what makes our collaboration so enriching: we look at society and our role in it in the same way.'

> **Technology companies are traditionally used to finding technological solutions to a problem. Circular thinking is much more based on partnerships.**
>
> Patrick Van den Bossche, Agoria director

## Agoria

### What exactly does the Green Deal entail?

**Patrick Van den Bossche, Agoria director:**
'I see it as Europe's man-on-the-moon moment: a really ambitious sustainability agenda that requires broad involvement at all levels of society. The focus of attention is the goal of being climate neutral by 2050. Energy, buildings, and mobility are major challenges in this respect. But there are also cornerstones devoted to pollution, hazardous substances and biodiversity, and an important role for a clean circular economy. The European Union drew up the Circular Economy Action Plan for this purpose in 2020.'

### What is the link between the circular economy and climate?

'To become climate neutral, huge investments are needed in infrastructure and renewable energy, among other things. This requires a lot of raw materials, which are already becoming scarce. The outcome: volatile prices and uncertainty for companies faced with increasing demand. About 50% of $CO_2$ emissions are also linked to raw materials, and in this context, circularity becomes indispensable.'

'In Belgium, we're already quite far along with recycling, especially when it comes to metals. Nonetheless, focusing more on resource efficiency, recovery, and reuse is a necessary complementary strategy. Because, the longer the lifespan, the better we can preserve the added value of raw materials and products in our society. A refurbished smartphone is a hundred times more worth than the raw materials it contains.'

'New business models, such as light as a service, supported by digital technology, play an important role in this. These models automatically close the recycling circle because the provider will already be thinking about what to do with his product after its first use, sometimes ten years down the line.'

### How does the Circular Economy Action Plan affect manufacturers of electronic devices?

'The global tendency is to think more in terms of value chains and ecosystems. This is quite an adjustment because technology companies are traditionally used to finding technological solutions to a problem. Circular thinking is much more based on partnerships. How do you use ecological design so that other parties can easily recycle or repair the

## What does Agoria do?

Agoria is the federation of the technology industry. It advises its members on regulations, represents them to policy makers, and supports innovation and knowledge sharing in the sector. Agoria was one of the founders of Recupel.

product? How do you balance that with product safety when outsiders start working on your products? A challenge here is to create added value for each party in the value chain.'

### How can manufacturers of electronic devices become circular?

'We encourage our members to experiment. Choose a segment that lends itself to it, don't try to change your whole product range at once. Map out your product's ecosystem so you can see what happens to it after it is sold and identify life stages where you can still create added value. For example, Atlas Copco offers used compressors that it re-manufactures itself according to current standards and with a renewed warranty. So, they are tapping into a customer niche that cannot or will not necessarily invest in their all-new compressors.'

### What are the benefits of a digital circular economy?

'In a nutshell, this is about using data to extend the lifespan of a product or facilitate its processing. For example, a recycling company that wants to know what materials are in a device. However, the concept is much broader. By re-manufacturing your own devices, you learn something about its wear and tear and so can develop even more reliable sustainable products. Actually, a lot of this kind of data is already available. But manufacturers don't always realise this or don't immediately see how they can use it to create added value.'

### The EU has included the 'right to repair' in its circular action plan... is that a good idea?

'The right to repair is very complex and goes beyond the idea that you just repair a product. In principle, everything is repairable, but it's also about the cost price or about the age and performance of the product itself versus the latest state of the art. Manufacturers are required to keep spare parts available for a certain period of time. But technology can change very quickly, so they have to build up a stock of parts they no longer use. This is a cost that the consumer must pay and it may also be a social cost. We must look at possible solutions, such as the professionalisation of the repair sector. This can create new jobs. This is how we can constructively fulfil the important role of repair in a circular economy.'



# 20 years of working hand in hand

20 YEARS OF RECUPEL

**This year we celebrate our 20th anniversary. What started out on a small scale has now become a well-oiled network. We have been a front runner in Europe from the moment the company was founded. We are still ahead of the pack thanks to our strong communication and the expansion of our network. Today, we are preparing our organisation for the future by, among other things, focusing more on what role we can play in the circular economy.**

2001

## Recupel founded

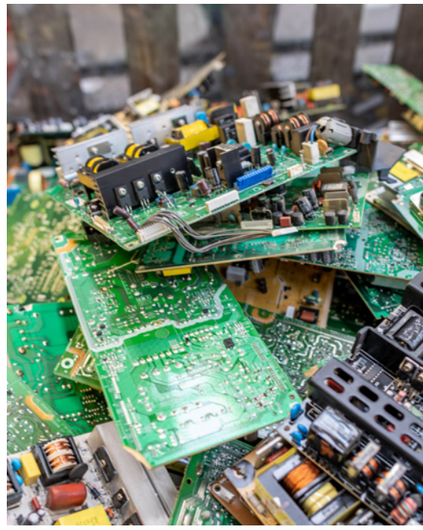
On 1 July 2001, Belgium introduces the ‘obligation to accept’ for manufacturers and importers of household electrical and electronic equipment. Which is why Recupel was founded by the professional federations Agoria, FEE, and Traxio. Recupel sets up a collection system to collect, transport, and process electrical and electronic equipment. In the beginning, Recupel collected only the following categories: audiovisual devices, small electrical and electronic devices, information and communication technology, garden and work tools, and large white goods and fridges and freezers.

2002

## Immediately front runner in Europe

Europe approves the first directive on e-waste, which suddenly required all member states to introduce a system similar to that of Recupel. So, Recupel is playing a pioneering role in the collection of discarded electrical and electronic equipment. In total, we collected some 36,000 tonnes of e-waste in our first full year of operation.

2007



## Professional collection of e-waste starts

From this point onward, we also collected professional electrical and electronic equipment, such as industrial vacuum cleaners and drinks vending machines. This is because a European directive came into force that requires importers and manufacturers of professional equipment to accept discarded devices.

2005



## Collection of light bulbs starts

Four years after being founded, we also started collecting light bulbs (gas discharge lamps and fluorescent lamps) and medical and laboratory equipment.

2006

## Reuse sector agreement

From the start, we have been working closely with recycling centres. In 2006, we signed a collaboration agreement with the reuse sector: the Flemish HERW!N and Ressources for Wallonia and Brussels. We ensure that, as much as possible, collected devices that deserve a second life are passed on to the reuse sector.

2009

## 100,000 tonnes collected

We reached two major milestones. First, we passed the 100,000 tonne mark for electrical and electronic devices collected. Second, we also started collecting smoke alarms.

2011

## New logo and new collaboration

At the 10-year anniversary of Recupel, it was time for a new logo: green makes way for blue. For the first time, we also started out collaboration with Close the Gap, the organisation that collects and repairs discarded laptops and mobile phones from companies and organisations and then ships them to Africa and South America. We won a Sustainable Partnership Award for this collaboration.

2012

## Ambitious European goal

Europe is stepping up the fight against e-waste. Member States are required to collect by 2019 at least 65% of the average weight of what was placed on the market in the last three years. This is 85% of what is discarded. Moreover, all products containing electrical or electronic components are considered to be electrical and electrical and electronic equipment. In the same year, we relocated to a new office with flexible work stations.

2014

## Recycle Points launched

Starting in 2014, Recycle Points for light bulbs and small electrical and electronic equipment (i.e. smaller than your head) were installed in supermarkets, DIY shops, public buildings, and shops. In the meantime, the network now has more than 3,000 points spread across Belgium.

2016

## E-waste streams mapped out

Recupel commissioned Deloitte to investigate where the various e-waste streams end up. The study shows that in 2016, Recupel was responsible for collecting and recycling approximately 45% of the devices brought to market. Nonetheless, about 30% of the discarded electrical and electronic equipment remain under the radar. Which is one of the reasons why we are still not achieving the European target of 65%. So, when we announced the results, we called for closer collaboration between the different partners.

2018

## BeWeee tool and artificial intelligence

We set up the non-profit organisation BeWeee with seven partners to improve the reporting of e-waste. It makes it easy for companies to report how much e-waste they bring to the market and collect and how much volume they process or divert to another end destination. We also started an artificial intelligence project to automate the sampling of e-waste.

2019

## Smart circle and the circular economy

We launched a digital marketplace for discarded electrical and electronic equipment where we offer a customised solution for companies, schools, and care institutions, among others. We also integrated the circular economy into our mission and vision. It is our ambition to become a hub of the circular economy in Belgium.

Recupel

2020

We developed a new brand and communication strategy to be fully prepared for the future. Our new slogan? '**We will make it into something great.**' This refers to the fact that raw materials are not lost but can be reused. This is how we forge the link between urban mining and the circular economy.

# Governing body

## BW-REC

**Dirk Van Assche**

Chairman
BW-REC

**Bruno Vermoesen**

Vice-Chairman
BW-REC

## AV

**Kris Den Haese**

Chairman
Recupel AV

**Henri Peeters**

Vice-Chairman
Recupel AV

## SDA

**Terence Vanstals**

Chairman
Recupel SDA

**Bart Quispel**

Vice-Chairman
Recupel SDA

## ICT

**Werner Donckers**

Chairman
Recupel ICT

**Patrick Lens**

Vice-Chairman
Recupel ICT

## ET&G

**Jean-Pierre Van Keer**

Chairman
Recupel ET&G

**Johan Surkyn**

Vice-Chairman
Recupel ET&G

## LIGHTREC

**Hendrik Vermeire**

Chairman
LightRec

**Derek McMillan**

Vice-Chairman
LightRec

## MELAREC

**Koen Waelput**

Chairman
MeLaRec

## Federations

**Rony Haentjens**

Vice-Chairman
MeLaRec

**Baudouin Corluy**

Director
AGORIA

**Peter Binnemans**

Director & Secretary
FEE

# Financial balance sheet Recupel

*(amounts in euro)*

| ASSETS | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|
| Intangible fixed assets | 0,00 | 874.13 |
| Tangible fixed assets | 1,014,168.78 | 1,632,129.11 |
| Financial fixed assets | 140.00 | 140.00 |
| Fixed assets | 1,014,308.78 | 1,633,143,24 |
| Accounts receivable within one year | 4,959,649.97 | 5,107,772.71 |
| Cash | 5,782,719.10 | 4,947,325.27 |
| Deferrals and accruals | 72,041.36 | 89,772.80 |
| Current assets | 10,814,410.43 | 10,144,870.78 |
| **TOTAL ASSETS** | **11,828,719.21** | **11,778,014.02** |

| LIABILITIES | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|
| Accruals for risks and costs | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Accruals | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Accounts payable within one year | 11,828,719.21 | 11,778,014.02 |
| Current liabilities | 11,828,719.21 | 11,778,014.02 |
| **TOTAL LIABILITIES** | **11,828,719.21** | **11,778,014,02** |

| RESULT OF THE YEAR | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|
| Turnover | 43,134,997.83 | 41,201,843.24 |
| Non-recurring operating income | 1,607.60 | 1,941.50 |
| Operating income | 43,136,605.43 | 41,203,784.74 |
| Services and other | -38,729,540.77 | -37,256,246.06 |
| Remunerations and direct social securities | -3,621,248.85 | -3,078,657.38 |
| Depreciations, provisions | -756,317.35 | -840,164.25 |
| Accruals for risks and costs | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Other operating charges | -44,756.60 | -44,870.54 |
| Non-recurring operating charges | -2,686.92 | -1,548.21 |
| Operating charges | -43,154,550.49 | -41,221,486.44 |
| Operating profit/loss | -17,945.06 | -17,701.70 |
| Financial income | 31,413.47 | 33,759.83 |
| Financial charges | -13,468.41 | -16,058.13 |
| Financial results | 17,945.06 | 17,701.70 |
| Exceptional results | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| **RESULT TO BE CARRIED FORWARD** | **0.00** | **0.00** |

# Financial balance sheet sectors

| | BW-REC | RECUPEL AV | RECUPEL SDA | RECUPEL ICT | RECUPEL ET&G | LIGHTREC | MELAREC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ASSETS** | | | | | | | |
| Accounts receivable within one year | 3,516,812.75 | 2,338,236.50 | 575,994.21 | 1,223,706.10 | 401,489.30 | 1,579,943.65 | 1,120,810.12 |
| Cash | 51,321,072.56 | 17,922,691.98 | 13,599,005.98 | 8,076,336.90 | 8,025,450.63 | 34,238,726.52 | 3,790,323.97 |
| Deferrals and accruals | 7,398.27 | 3,981.34 | 2,898.93 | 2,073.96 | 1,673.25 | 6,334.29 | 5,089.26 |
| Current assets | 54,845,283.58 | 20,264,909.82 | 14,177,899.12 | 9,302,116.96 | 8,428,613.18 | 35,825,004.46 | 4,916,223.35 |
| **TOTAL ASSETS** | **54,845,283.58** | **20,264,909.82** | **14,177,899.12** | **9,302,116.96** | **8,428,613.18** | **35,825,004.46** | **4,916,223.35** |
| **LIABILITIES** | | | | | | | |
| Allocated funds | 17,921,299.00 | 6,356,674.00 | 3,433,054.00 | 4,892,441.00 | 2,054,704.00 | 4,870,399.00 | 1,362,448.88 |
| Profit carried forward | 8,434,239.06 | 13,594,487.74 | 10,694,153.18 | 4,281,377.15 | 6,205,053.40 | 23,430,356.11 | 3,497,168.85 |
| Capital and reserves | 26,355,538.06 | 19,951,161.74 | 14,127,207.18 | 9,173,818.15 | 8,259,757.40 | 28,300,755.11 | 4,859,617.73 |
| Accruals for risks and costs | 28,041,169.54 | 43,692.88 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 95,697.90 | 7,412,743.13 | 0.00 |
| Accruals | 28,041,169.54 | 43,692.88 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 95,697.90 | 7,412,743.13 | 0.00 |
| Accounts payable within one year | 445,629.13 | 257,720.64 | 43,140.59 | 120,764.07 | 66,819.82 | 99,134.40 | 51,507.84 |
| Deferrals and accruals | 2,946.85 | 12,334.56 | 7,551.35 | 7,534.74 | 6,338.06 | 12,371.82 | 5,097.78 |
| Current liabilities | 448,575.98 | 270,055.20 | 50,691.94 | 128,298.81 | 73,157.88 | 111,506.22 | 56,605.62 |
| **TOTAL LIABILITIES** | **54,845,283.58** | **20,264,909.82** | **14,177,899.12** | **9,302,116.96** | **8,428,613.18** | **35,825,004.46** | **4,916,223.35** |
| **RESULT ACCOUNT** (on the 31th of December 2020) | | | | | | | |
| Turnover | 10,092,964.33 | 4,946,565.42 | 838,188.43 | 1,479,684.67 | 274,002.71 | 2,674,166.77 | 2,039,442.23 |
| Other operating income | 658,445.43 | 639,955.58 | 579,842.34 | 673,168.17 | 624,612.88 | 871,860.74 | 694,427.16 |
| Operating income | 10,751,409.76 | 5,586,521.00 | 1,418,030.77 | 2,152,852.84 | 898,615.59 | 3,546,027.51 | 2,733,869.39 |
| Purchases | -14,862,795.19 | -5,596,400.29 | -2,317,983.59 | -3,067,832.74 | -1,167,627.87 | -2,793,311.47 | -830,342.75 |
| Services and other | -1,320,972.19 | -1,080,052.32 | -945,870.97 | -1,283,699.78 | -1,289,262.95 | -1,991,225.38 | -1,227,968.72 |
| Depreciation | -21,557.25 | -2,936.80 | -12,774.72 | -3,293.53 | -264.71 | -4,681.34 | -2,418.30 |
| Accruals for risks and costs | 8,579,062.12 | 197,011.38 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 97,635.23 | 1,783,461.15 | 0.00 |
| Other operating costs | -11,836.20 | -20,953.14 | -18,828.15 | -6,455.83 | -10,200.33 | -39,808.00 | -3,195.44 |
| Operating charges | -7,638,098.71 | -6,503,331.17 | -3,295,457.43 | -4,361,281.88 | -2,369,720.63 | -3,045,565.04 | -2,063,925.21 |
| Operating profit/loss | 3,113,311.05 | -916,810.17 | -1,877,426.66 | -2,208,429.04 | -1,471,105.04 | 500,462.47 | 669,944.18 |
| Financial income | 25,259.81 | 9,373.40 | 7,705.92 | 6,064.82 | 5,134.40 | 18,418.69 | 2,341.14 |
| Financial charges | -8,517.43 | -2,048.19 | -3,384.93 | -1,655.51 | -2,450.98 | -7,038.93 | -972.11 |
| Financial results | 16,742.38 | 7,325.21 | 4,320.99 | 4,409.31 | 2,683.42 | 11,379.76 | 1,369.03 |
| **RESULT TO BE CARRIED FORWARD** | **3,130,053.43** | **-909,484.96** | **-1,873,105.67** | **-2,204,019.73** | **-1,468,421.62** | **511,842.23** | 671,313.21 |

Recupel vzw

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Recupel