

# RecyClass



## RECYCLASS ANNUAL REPORT 2020



# RecyClass

Making Plastic  
Packaging Circular

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## WELCOME

by the Chairman of RecyClass,  
Paolo Glerean

This year has been challenging in many ways for everyone, and it is especially in these trying times that we are thankful to all our members and partners for continuously supporting the work of RecyClass.

The initial idea of RecyClass was to **create a community where the entire plastic packaging value-chain can work jointly on scientifically defining and assessing plastic packaging recyclability**, creating at the same time a common, fact-based language to do so.

Much work remains ahead of us on the alignment of methodologies and definitions across Europe, and this is where every single member will play a crucial role.

Our journey has only begun, and we are confident that together we can achieve truly circular plastic packaging.



## WELCOME

by the Advisory Board Chairman of RecyClass,  
Gian De Belder

Driving **Plastic Packaging Circularity** is key if we want to eliminate plastic waste and want to ensure that these highly valuable materials are kept in the economy.

It's great to see membership of RecyClass – our cross-value chain initiative on plastic packaging - is growing rapidly. Only through **collaboration and a science-based approach** we can optimize the definitions, methodology, design guidelines, self-assessment tool and test protocols to assess new innovate packages and provide certifications.

We now need to drive EU-wide acceptance to create a level-play field for all: **harmonization** on a range of important topics (DfR guidelines, collection, consumer participation, sorting and end market uptake via specifications on secondary materials) is truly required to increase recycling rates.

**Progress in 2020:** It is great to have so much member's expertise in this initiative, which led to multiple technology and product approvals.

It is also good to see great progress on a standardized sorting protocol and guidance to use claims related to recyclability and recycled content. Several organizations are now accredited certification bodies, and more labs have been accredited to run the testing protocols!

Next to that, also a TC on PS and a protocol for PP containers have been established. Much more work is foreseen for 2021.

If we want plastic packaging to remain successful in the future, we all need to speak the same language on both company, association and personal level, and this is where I see the critical role of RecyClass through its members.



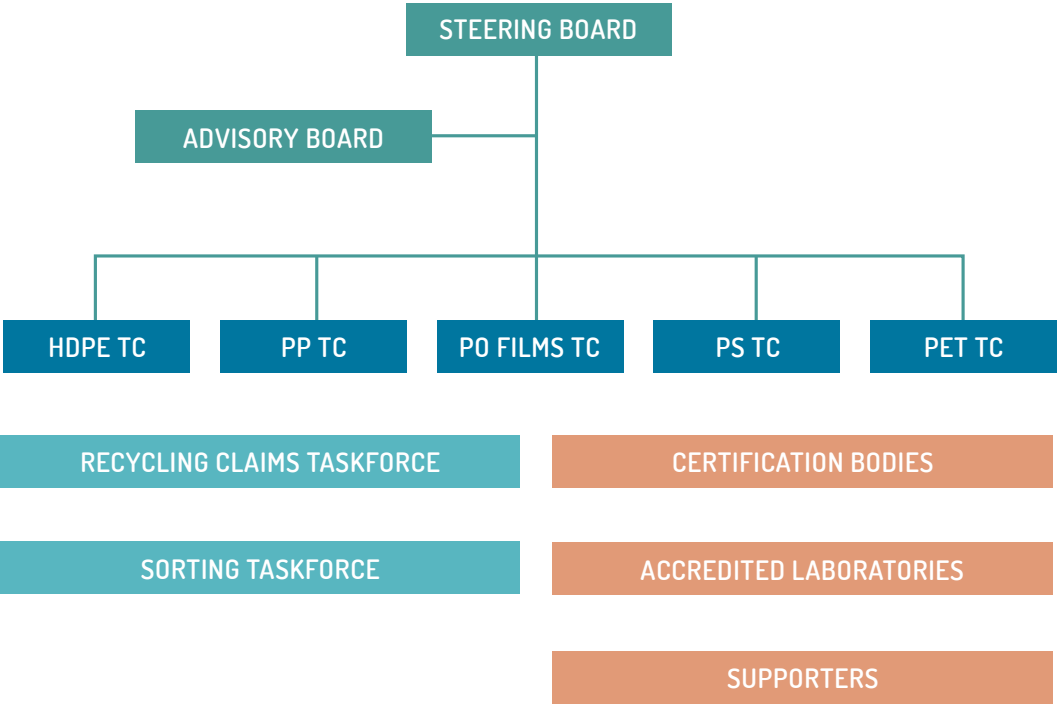
# STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

## Chapter 01

# STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

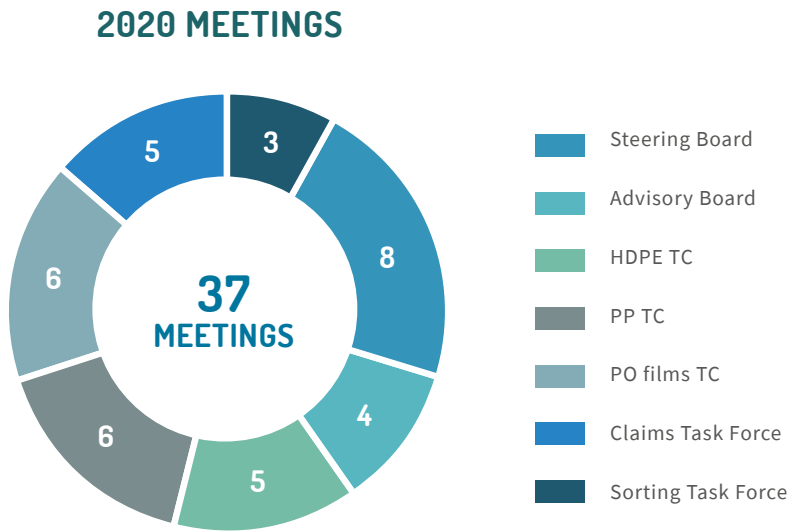
## 1.1. STRUCTURE

The structure of RecyClass has been revised and includes now additional Task Forces, the Certification Bodies, the Accredited Laboratories, and the Supporters, as well as 2 new Technical Committees. The new format aims at enhancing the involvement and cooperation with stakeholders.



## 1.2. MEETINGS

In 2020, the RecyClass members demonstrated their involvement in all working groups by participating in nearly 40 meetings, resulting in all the achievements laid out in the following report.



## 1.3. HARMONIZATION

**As harmonization is a pillar of RecyClass, in 2020 RecyClass worked to liaise with several organizations, leading to the increase of harmonization within the EU market.**

RecyClass signed especially partnership agreements with Aimplas, Circular Analytics, plastship, Recoup, Redilo, Suez.Circpack and Veolia.

In parallel, RecyClass had several exchanges with HTP-Cyclos, CEFLEX, CITEO, APR and other organizations to discuss about a possible cooperation and harmonization.

From April 2020 RecyClass is Associate Member of SPICE initiative, the Sustainable Packaging Initiative for Cosmetics. SPICE is an initiative that brings together organizations in the cosmetics industry to collectively shape the future of sustainable packaging. RecyClass is supporting the cosmetic industry on redesign their plastic packaging.

MEMBERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

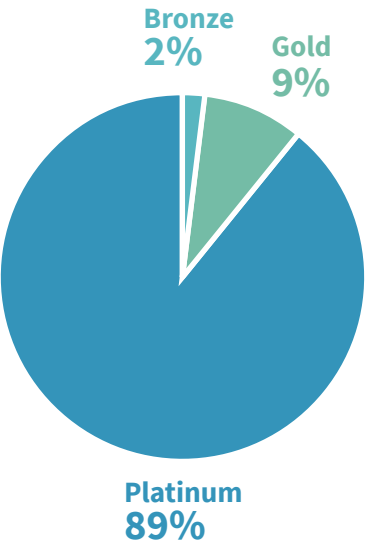
Chapter  
02

# MEMBERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

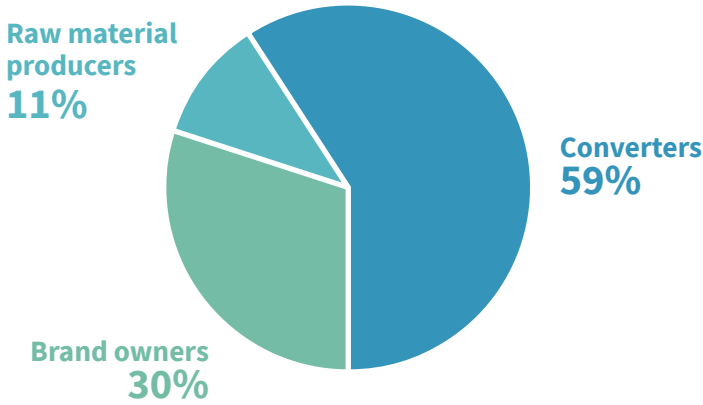
## INVOLVING NEW MEMBERS IN RECYCLASS HAS BEEN A KEY PRIORITY OF 2020.

The number of members doubled in 2020 and 2 Gold members upgraded to Platinum members.

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL



MEMBERSHIP BUSINESS



20+  
NEW MEMBERS

47  
MEMBERS

+ 50%  
GROWTH



TECHNICAL HIGHLIGHTS

Chapter  
**03**

# TECHNICAL HIGHLIGHTS

## 3.1. METHODOLOGY & PROTOCOLS

In June 2020, RecyClass published **the RecyClass Recyclability Methodology which provides comprehensive assessment methods used to evaluate and certify the recyclability of a package within RecyClass.**



RecyClass released the Recyclability Evaluation Protocol for PP Containers which adds to the already available Recyclability Protocols for HDPE Containers and PE Films. The Protocol provides a laboratory procedure on how to determine the recyclability of a PP container opening a window to applications for a Technology or Product Approval of innovations in PP packaging.

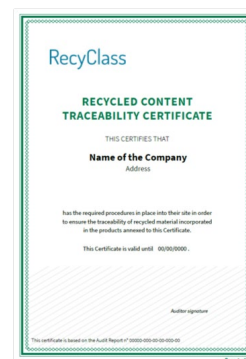
Finally, RecyClass is working on the Sorting Protocol and on the Recyclability Evaluation Protocol for PP Flexibles, as well as on Quick Test protocols for washing and paper labels, which should be released at the beginning of 2021.

## 3.2. CERTIFICATIONS

During the summer, **RecyClass announced the implementation of the Recyclability Certifications**, operated through recognised and independent Certification Bodies, and based on the RecyClass Methodology. The first course for auditors has led to the recognition of seven Certification Bodies, representing twenty auditors.

Additionally, **RecyClass published the Recycled Content Traceability Audit Scheme, to evaluate and calculate the recycled content used in plastics.** This Audit Scheme was created in alignment with European standards and based on its requirements, the RecyClass Recycled Plastics Traceability Certification was established to harmonize the approach towards assessment of the recycled content of products for companies making environmental claims.

RecyClass is developing a Recyclability and Recycled Content Use of Claims Guidance and logos for the Certifications which should be released throughout 2021.



RecyClass	PE HD Coloured Conditions		
	YES - FULL COMPATIBILITY A/B*	CONDITIONAL LIMITED COMPATIBILITY B/C*	NO - LOW COMPATIBILITY D/E*
Class coding	Materials that passed the testing protocols with no negative impact on the environment in HDPE containers	Materials that passed the testing protocols if certain conditions are met (see materials that have not been tested yet, but pose a low risk of contamination with HDPE containers)	Materials that failed the testing protocols (see materials that have not been tested yet, but pose a high risk of contamination with HDPE containers)
Container	HDPE	HDPE with other PE (LLDPE, LDPE, MDPE)	HDPE with other PE (LLDPE, LDPE, MDPE)
Material composition	A when PE content is > 90%, B when PE content is > 80%	C when PE content is > 70%	D when PE content is > 60%, E when PE content is > 50%
Color	All colors	Black (see test and data values (NOT detectable))	Black (see test and data values (NOT detectable))
Product residues (from to empty label)	All the index is < 1%, B if the index is < 10%	C if the index is < 10%, D if the index is < 20%	E if the index is < 20%, F if the index is < 25%
Barrier	EVOL < 0.001 g/m², PEG-MH in layers with MH < 0.1 μm, (see below)	EVOL < 0.001 g/m², PEG-MH in layers with MH < 0.1 μm, (see below)	EVOL < 0.001 g/m², PEG-MH in layers with MH < 0.1 μm, (see below)
Adhesive	HDPE, LDPE, MDPE	PE, PET, PETG, PLA (all with a density < 1 g/cm³)	PE, PET, PETG, PLA (all with a density < 1 g/cm³)
Labels	Labels in HDPE, LDPE, MDPE (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer	Labels in PET, PETG, PLA (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer	Labels in PET, PETG, PLA (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer
Blow	Labels in HDPE, LDPE, MDPE (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer	Labels in PET, PETG, PLA (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer	Labels in PET, PETG, PLA (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer
Adhesive for labels	Labels in HDPE, LDPE, MDPE (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer	Labels in PET, PETG, PLA (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer	Labels in PET, PETG, PLA (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer
Other components	Labels in HDPE, LDPE, MDPE (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer	Labels in PET, PETG, PLA (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer	Labels in PET, PETG, PLA (all with density < 1 g/cm³), which do not hinder the recognition of the underlying PE polymer

\* Class coding resulting by the RecyClass assessment. B class is reported two times because of the 90-95% amount of PE in the packaging or because of slight incompatibilities in the design.  
\* Evohex resin can be either polypropylene or polyethylene.

## 3.4. DESIGN FOR RECYCLING GUIDELINES

Each Technical Committee worked on improving their respective Design for Recycling Guideline to answer the need of the plastic value chain.

A new set of guidelines has been published during the Summer. Additionally, a new structure has been decided to include the material composition, the packaging sizes, the product residues, and the recycled content in the guidelines, allowing a better alignment with the Recyclability Methodology.

## 3.3. TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

RecyClass HDPE TC tested the impact of EVOH in HDPE containers via independent testing based on the Recyclability Evaluation Protocol for HDPE containers. The findings show that when EVOH is sandwiched in a packaging structure with PE-g-MAH tie layer, the recyclability of the package is improved.

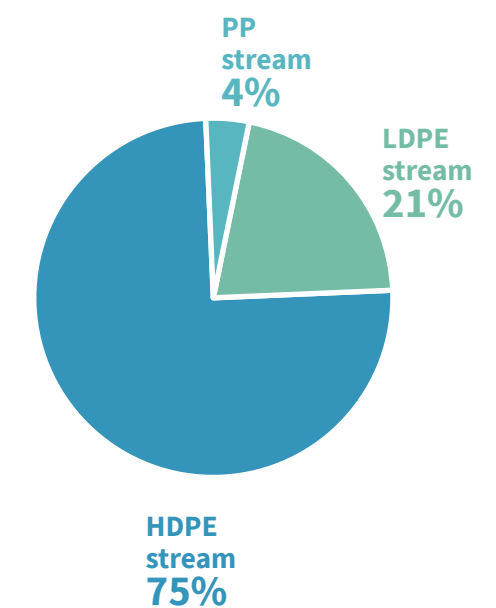
RecyClass PO Films TC started as well pre-screening lab tests on laminating adhesives for PE film structures. The findings will be used to improve the Design for Recycling Guidelines and the online tool.

In Autumn 2020, RecyClass kicked-off the Technical Committee on PS. The first task of this TC is to establish the Design for Recycling Guideline. Recyclers, converters, and brand owners are providing their technical expertise to define the best way forward for PS packaging.

## 3.5. TECHNOLOGY & PRODUCT APPROVALS

In 2020, RecyClass Technical Committees delivered 28 Approvals. Twenty-three were Technology Approvals and five were Product Approvals.

### APPROVALS REPARTITION

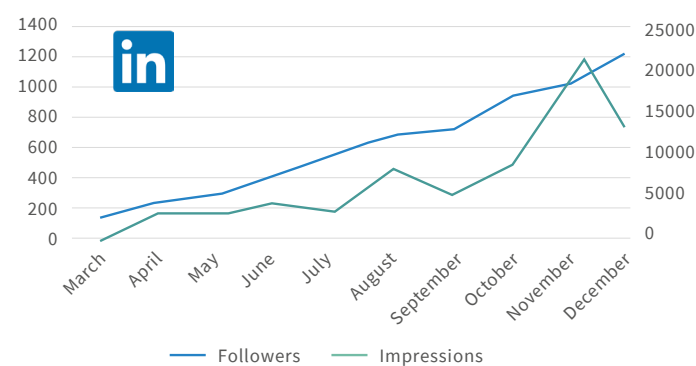
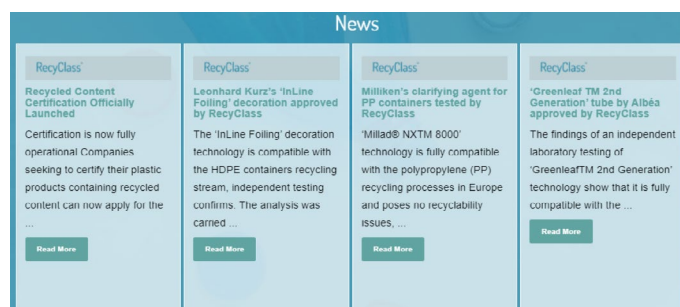


# COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS

## Chapter 04

# COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS

## 4.1. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION



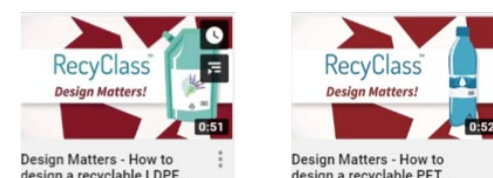
### PRESS RELEASES

RecyClass published 16 Press releases announcing Approvals, lab findings, cooperation, launch of Certifications, publication of Protocols and the Recyclability Methodology.

### LINKEDIN PAGE

Launched in March 2020, the new RecyClass LinkedIn page has now more than one thousand two hundred followers.

About 10 posts are published per month, and in November RecyClass posts appeared in the feed of more than 20,000 LinkedIn users (impressions).



### LINKEDIN CAMPAIGNS

RecyClass carried out several communication campaigns on LinkedIn, mainly to inform about the importance of recyclability in packaging design. Practical advice is given through meaningful illustrations.

### VIDEOS SERIES ON YOUTUBE & WEBINARS

In parallel to the LinkedIn page, RecyClass ran several communications activities, as series of videos called *Design Matters* available on YouTube and public webinars.

### NEWSLETTERS

The newsletter is edited every month. It gathers the latest news regarding design for recycling and the recyclability of plastic packaging.

### UNWRAPPED WEBINARS

The RecyClass Unwrapped webinars started in October 2020. RecyClass members, certification bodies and accredited laboratories participated as speakers to enrich the discussion. The webinars have so far gathered around 300 participants each on average.

4.2. CONFERENCES AND WEBINAR PRESENTATIONS

- JANUARY 14** SVI annual conference – Food Packaging Forum: *Design for Recycling Plastic Packaging*

**FEBRUARY 7** Holy Grail 2.0 – side meeting: *RecyClass for Retailers*

**FEBRUARY 12** AISE First Charter for Sustainable Cleaning 2020+ symposium: *The way forward for plastic packaging: design for recyclability*

**FEBRUARY 17** APR annual meeting - Package Design Drives the Circular Economy: *Connecting Globally on the Circular Economy*
- JULY 30** Ask the Expert – Livestream Series: *Plastic packaging recyclability: how to assess it?*

**OCTOBER 13** Webinarium Natureef: *Introduction to RecyClass*

**NOVEMBER 12** BPF Plastics Recycling in a Changing World: Advances and Insights: *Reducing confusion on rigids recyclability with RecyClass*

**NOVEMBER 17** FINAT webinar series: *RecyClass Testing Procedures*
- NOVEMBER 26** Taghleef Industries Dynamic Cycle: *Design for Recycling with RecyClass*

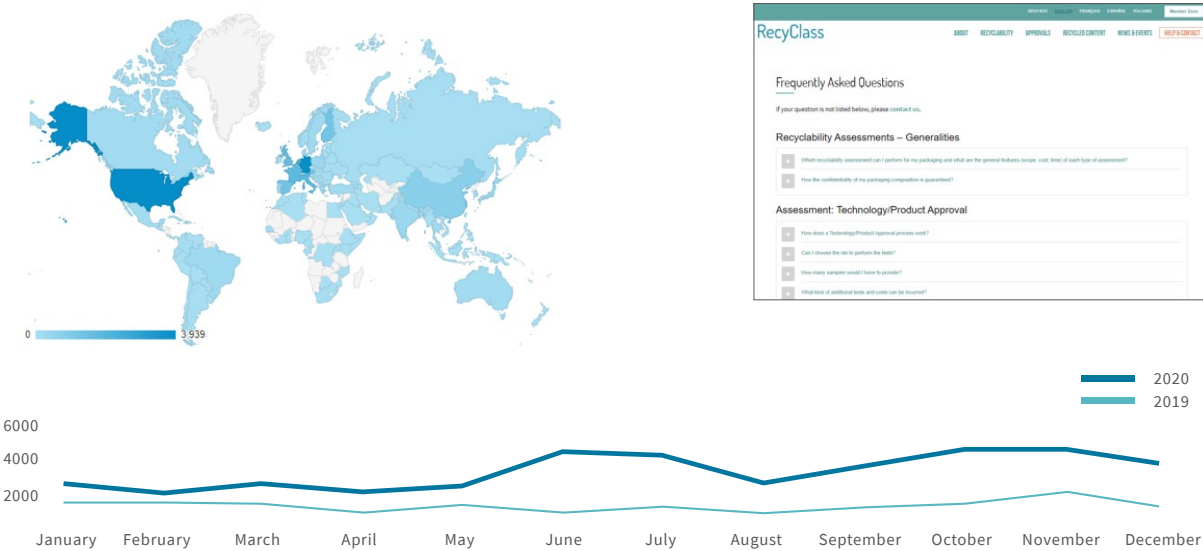
**DECEMBER 10** PRSE: *Scientific approach towards recyclability with RecyClass*

**DECEMBER 11** PRSE: How to improve the PP films recyclability: *the need for a standard protocol*

4.3. WEBSITE

The RecyClass website structure was improved and several sections were added. A dedicated menu “About” brings now more transparency on RecyClass work and organization. A menu symmetrical to the Recyclability, has been created for the Recycled Content. Additionally, new pages, such as Frequently Asked Questions and Events, have been published.

Website traffic has tripled in 2020, compared to 2019, reaching for this year about 30,000 visitors spread all over the world.



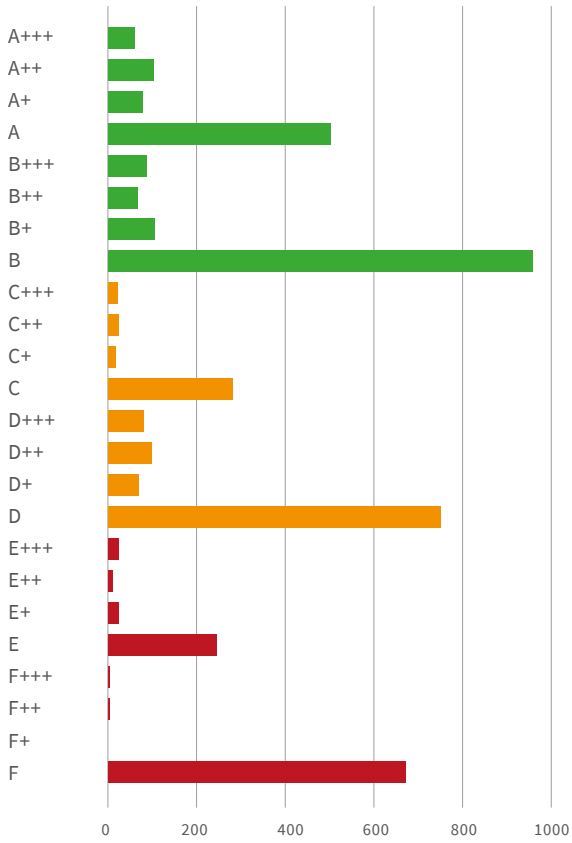
4.4. TOOL

In March 2020, RecyClass released a new interface for the Online Tool, leading to a significant increase in the number of users.

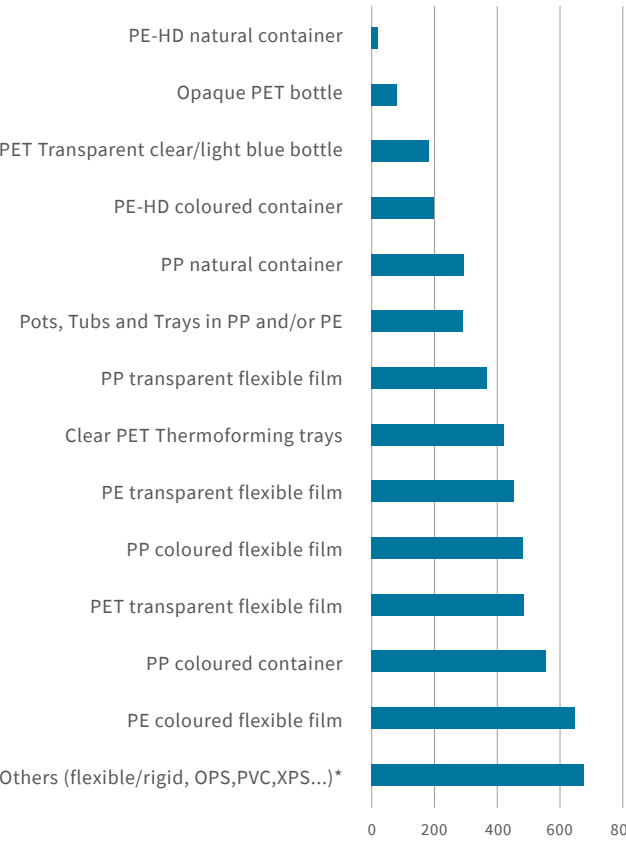
Users seem to have a strong interest for flexible packaging analysis. Moreover, based on the scoring results, packaging containing recycled content material remains in the minority.



STATISTICS - CLASSES



STATISTICS TYPES OF PACKAGING



THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR SUPPORT



# LOOKING FORWARD TO WORK WITH ALL OF YOU IN 2021!



RecyClass



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