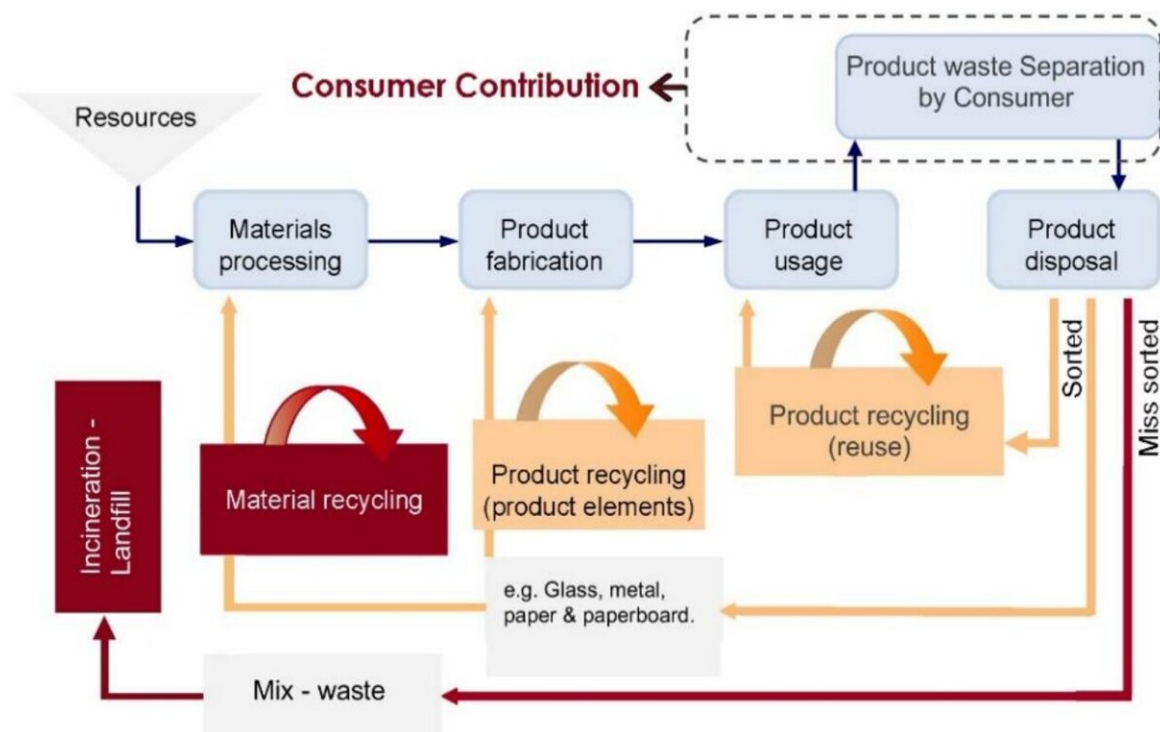


# Smarter design of food packaging helps consumers sort waste better

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Consumers' contribution in closing the loop in the material flow. Credit: Modified from Lienig and Bruemmer (2017)

Does the design of food packaging play a role in consumers' waste sorting behavior? Yes, that's what has been shown in a new doctoral thesis, recently presented at the University of Borås, Sweden. What is unique is that the research project starts from a user-centered

perspective.

Babak Nemat, a researcher in the research area of Resource Recovery, has concluded in his doctoral work that the design of the [packaging](#) itself can be a key to influencing consumers to separate the different fractions that the packaging consists of correctly.

"The packaging design can influence consumers' sorting behavior and reduce miss-sorting by being based on the user and a sustainable behavior. By communicating the value, function, and recyclability through the packaging usage phase, the design has the potential to influence the consumer to sort properly," he said.

In the research project, he has started from the importance of the packaging's shape, texture and color, but he also concluded that the packaging design can be used to give consumers knowledge about recycling.

"Until now, research on the [waste management](#) of food packaging has mainly focused on how different materials can be recycled, while the [design](#) has been reserved for marketing the content itself. The interesting and new thing that emerges in my research project is that it is possible to increase the amount of recycled packaging material and at the same time meet the demands of consumers and marketing."

The method in the research project—starting from the consumer's perspective when designing packaging—is entirely new and has not been used in previous research on [waste](#) management.

**More information:** Thesis:  
[hb.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1657926&dswid=-7226](http://hb.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1657926&dswid=-7226)

Provided by University of Borås

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