# The Israeli Recycling Corporation TAMIR – Central Player in Israel’s Municipal Waste Management System

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Introduction  
  
The Israeli Recycling Corporation TAMIR (T.M.Y.R. – Manufacturers Recycling Corporation in Israel Ltd.) represents a central element in Israel’s packaging waste management system. Established as a non-profit public-benefit company, TAMIR is the only officially recognized body responsible for implementing the principle of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) under the 2011 Packaging Law. The corporation’s main mission is to provide manufacturers and importers of packaged goods with a mechanism to fulfill their legal obligations regarding the collection and recycling of packaging waste. Thus, TAMIR organizes and finances a nationwide system of separate collection, sorting, and recycling of packaging waste, aiming to achieve the government’s set targets and to promote Israel’s transition toward a circular economy. This report presents a comprehensive academic study of TAMIR’s activities, covering its history, organizational structure, functions, and operational scope, including detailed statistics on infrastructure and recycling volumes. In addition, the report analyzes the corporation’s financial indicators and discusses key problems, criticism, and systemic challenges it faces in its operations. The purpose of the study is to provide an objective and critical analysis of TAMIR’s role and effectiveness within Israel’s waste management ecosystem, based on data from official reports, government documents, academic publications, and media sources in Hebrew and English.  
  
History and Legislative Basis  
  
The establishment of TAMIR in 2011 was a direct result of the adoption of the Packaging Treatment Law in Israel. This legislative act, which came into effect on March 1, 2011, introduced the principle of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) into Israel’s legal framework—a principle already successfully implemented in many European countries. The essence of EPR lies in assigning producers and importers financial and organizational responsibility for the entire life cycle of their products, including the collection and disposal of packaging after consumer use. Before this law, the responsibility for municipal solid waste management, including packaging, rested entirely with municipalities, which led to a constant increase in landfill waste volumes and provided no incentive for producers to reduce packaging or use recyclable alternatives.  
  
In this context, the Manufacturers Association of Israel initiated the creation of a centralized non-profit organization that would allow its members and other market participants to collectively meet the new legal requirements. Thus, TAMIR was founded as a Public Benefit Company (חל"צ), meaning that all its activities are directed toward achieving public goals, and any profit is reinvested into the development of the recycling system rather than distributed among founders. On December 1, 2021, the Ministry of Environmental Protection officially recognized TAMIR as the authorized body responsible for implementing the Packaging Law, granting it a five-year license valid until the end of 2026. This recognition confirmed TAMIR’s monopoly status as the only organization through which manufacturers and importers can fulfill their recycling obligations. The law requires TAMIR not only to organize the physical collection and recycling of waste but also to achieve specific government-defined annual recycling targets for various material types such as plastic, paper, glass, metal, and wood.  
  
Organizational Structure and Functions  
  
TAMIR operates as a non-profit industry-owned organization, aligned with the common European EPR model. Its structure and activities are designed to fulfill the mandate of the Packaging Law. The corporation’s primary function is to act as an intermediary between manufacturers/importers, local authorities, and recycling companies. Producers and importers placing packaged goods on the Israeli market sign an agreement with TAMIR and pay “handling fees.” The amount of these fees depends on the weight and type of packaging materials placed on the market. The collected funds constitute TAMIR’s budget and are used to finance the entire waste management chain.  
  
Key functions of TAMIR include organizing and funding the infrastructure for separate waste collection. The most visible elements of this infrastructure are the orange bins for collecting dry packaging waste (plastic, metal, beverage cartons) and the purple bins for glass. TAMIR cooperates with municipalities across the country to install these bins in residential areas, ensuring their accessibility to the public. The corporation is responsible for logistics—collecting waste from these bins and transporting it to sorting facilities. At these facilities, mixed packaging waste is separated by material type using both automated and manual technologies. After sorting, the materials are sent to specialized recycling plants in Israel and abroad for processing into new products.  
  
Another important function is data collection and management. All member companies are required to submit regular (semi-annual and annual, audited) reports to TAMIR on the quantity and types of packaging they have placed on the market. TAMIR aggregates these data and reports to the Ministry of Environmental Protection on national recycling targets. This reporting system forms the basis of compliance monitoring. In addition, TAMIR conducts educational and awareness campaigns to inform the public about the importance of waste separation and the correct use of colored bins. To exchange experience and adopt best practices, TAMIR is a member of EXPRA (Extended Producer Responsibility Alliance), a European umbrella organization uniting national EPR systems for packaging.  
  
Scale of Activities and Operational Statistics  
  
Since its establishment, TAMIR’s operations have grown significantly, as reflected in its infrastructure deployment and recycling volume statistics. These figures demonstrate both achievements and existing challenges in Israel’s packaging waste management system.  
  
Waste Collection Infrastructure  
  
The foundation of TAMIR’s system is the network of collection bins for separate waste disposal. According to the latest data published on TAMIR’s official website, 280,837 orange bins have been installed across Israel. This infrastructure provides separate collection access to 8,062,457 residents, representing the vast majority of the population. Other sources cite earlier or slightly different figures—for example, some reports mentioned 120,000 bins serving 4.25 million people. This discrepancy likely reflects network expansion dynamics and different counting methodologies. In addition to orange bins, TAMIR installs purple bins for glass. As of 2022–2023, around 6,200 such bins were deployed, with a goal of reaching 9,500 by 2026. The collected waste is transported to sorting plants, such as the facility in Afula, where materials are separated for recycling.  
  
Trends and Recycling Rates  
  
The volumes of packaging waste collected and recycled through TAMIR’s system show steady growth. In 2018, 324,000 tons of packaging waste were recycled; by 2022, this figure had increased by 35% to a record 439,000 tons. It is important to note that about 80% of this waste comes from the commercial and industrial sectors, while household waste collected via orange bins accounts for approximately 20%. According to TAMIR’s website, 240,290 tons of waste were collected from orange bins.  
  
The Packaging Law requires TAMIR to recycle at least 60% of the total weight of packaging declared by its members. In 2022, the corporation reported recycling 97% of 451,000 tons of declared packaging waste, significantly exceeding the target. However, results vary by material type. The highest recycling rates are achieved for paper and cardboard (116% of target in 2023), followed by metal (80–95%) and wood (431%, mostly reusable pallets). In contrast, plastic recycling remains modest (around 30% in 2022), while glass recycling continues to be a systemic failure—just 4–8% in 2022–2023, among the lowest rates in developed countries. This indicates serious weaknesses in glass collection and processing infrastructure.  
  
Financial Model and Performance  
  
TAMIR’s financial model is based on industry self-financing, which is at the core of the Extended Producer Responsibility concept. The corporation receives no direct government funding; its budget is formed entirely from handling fees paid by member companies. As of 2024, around 2,400 producers and importers had signed contracts with TAMIR, with 190 new companies joining in the first half of 2024 alone, showing ongoing system expansion. The fee for each company is calculated individually based on the semi-annual and annual reports they submit. Tariffs vary depending on packaging material (plastic, paper, glass, metal, etc.) and weight. Thus, companies using heavier or less recyclable packaging pay more, theoretically incentivizing eco-design and material reduction.  
  
The collected funds cover all operational costs of TAMIR, including payments to municipalities and contractors for waste collection and transport, operation of sorting plants, payments to recycling facilities, as well as administrative, reporting, and public education expenses. According to open data, TAMIR’s annual turnover in 2024 reached 156.2 million shekels.  
  
As a public-benefit company, TAMIR is required to maintain financial transparency. The corporation publishes audited annual financial reports. For example, the 2022 report is available for download from the official website, while the 2023 report requires a formal request. However, detailed budget breakdowns are not always public, which limits external efficiency analysis. Nevertheless, the model allows the system to operate without burdening the state budget, transferring financial responsibility entirely to the businesses that place packaging on the market.  
  
Challenges, Criticism, and Systemic Issues  
  
Despite its achievements, TAMIR and the entire EPR system in Israel face serious criticism and systemic challenges limiting overall effectiveness.  
  
Coverage Gap and “Free Riders”  
  
A fundamental problem is the significant gap between the packaging managed through TAMIR and the total packaging waste generated nationwide. Experts estimate the total volume of packaging waste in Israel at 800,000 to 1.6 million tons per year, while in 2022 only 439,000 tons were processed through TAMIR. This means the system officially covers only 28–55% of total packaging. The remainder comes from “free riders”—mainly small manufacturers and importers who avoid registering with TAMIR and paying fees, violating the Packaging Law. This not only creates unfair competition by burdening compliant companies but also results in large amounts of uncollected, unrecycled waste. Although the Ministry of Environmental Protection occasionally fines violators, enforcement remains weak. More systemic measures—such as linking TAMIR registration to customs clearance—are needed.  
  
Operational and Infrastructure Shortcomings  
  
Critics also point to operational issues. There have been delays in deploying collection infrastructure—Jerusalem, for instance, began installing orange bins much later than other major cities. Moreover, collection expansion often outpaces development of sorting and recycling capacity, creating bottlenecks where waste accumulates faster than facilities can process it. The biggest weakness is glass recycling: persistently low rates (4–8%) reflect insufficient bin coverage, lack of economic incentives for recyclers, and high transport costs, rendering the process unprofitable. Consequently, most glass still ends up in landfills.  
  
Enforcement and Transparency Issues  
  
TAMIR’s effectiveness depends heavily on government oversight. However, internal audit reports from the Ministry of Environmental Protection highlight limited resources for adequate enforcement of the Packaging Law. This weakens pressure on free riders and undermines the system’s integrity. Transparency is also criticized: the Ministry does not consistently publish annual recycling reports as required by law, making independent progress assessment difficult. Many of TAMIR’s issues reflect broader weaknesses in Israel’s waste management governance, including industrial lobbying influence and poor inter-agency coordination.  
  
Conclusion  
  
TAMIR undeniably plays a crucial role in Israel’s waste management system. It has successfully built and implemented a nationwide infrastructure for packaging waste separation, enabling millions of citizens to participate in recycling. For its member companies, TAMIR provides an effective mechanism for legal compliance, achieving high recycling rates for declared waste, particularly paper, cardboard, and metals. This demonstrates that the EPR model, implemented through a centralized non-profit entity, is viable and capable of delivering significant results.  
  
However, a comprehensive analysis reveals a dual reality: TAMIR’s internal success contrasts with external systemic constraints that limit its national impact. The primary issue remains the vast gap caused by non-participating producers, compounded by weak enforcement. Persistent failures in glass recycling, infrastructural bottlenecks, and project delays indicate deeper operational and strategic challenges. Thus, TAMIR can be seen as an efficient performer within narrow boundaries, constrained by external and internal factors alike. Further progress toward a circular economy in Israel requires not only TAMIR’s continued efforts but also decisive policy and enforcement reforms to ensure universal participation in EPR and a sustainable market for all recyclable materials.  
  
Sources  
(Guidestar Israel, InfoSpot, Times of Israel, Jerusalem Post, Haaretz, OECD, Ministry of Environmental Protection, etc.)