

SUSTAINABLE AND CIRCULAR

Valuation, repair, and re-sell of load carriers





Introduction

Logistics carriers such as pallets, collars, and metal containers play a key role in the efficient functioning of supply chains. Pallets, in particular, form the foundation of modern logistics and are indispensable in transportation, warehousing, and handling of goods across various industries.

In Europe, the pallet market (especially EPAL) shows a clear division: around 60% of turnover comes from new pallets, while 40% involves used ones. This is driven by factors such as quality, safety, and compliance with industry standards. Strict regulations—especially under the EPAL certification system—make new certified pallets a safer and more predictable choice for many companies. EPAL's declaration – “No deviations in wood quality, drying value, nail count, or block strength”—emphasizes the high standards required for market entry.



Sustainability vs. Market Practice

While reusing pallets is the most sustainable option, many companies still opt for new ones due to logistical and sanitary barriers. Managing returns and refurbishing used packaging requires a well-organised system, which can be time-consuming. In sectors like food and pharmaceuticals, hygiene standards often prohibit the use of used pallets.

Nevertheless, growing environmental awareness and the drive to optimise operational costs are prompting more companies to adopt circular packaging solutions—such as packaging recovery, repair, and resale of used logistics units.

To enable reuse, it's essential to understand the used packaging market, assess quality, and implement effective repair and resale systems. Rotom Group has been conducting such analyses and operations for years. This publication explores the role of valuation, repair, and resale to help other businesses benefit from these practices.



Second life for logistic carriers: economic, environmental, and logistical benefits

Selling used pallets is a first step toward circular packaging. While not a perfect model – where companies reuse their own pallets – it allows others to benefit from them. You're simply giving them a second life.

By selling to our company, you ensure that through proper sorting and repair, these pallets re-enter circulation and reach their full potential.

➔ Economic benefits

Reusing wooden pallets offers significant savings. Selling used or surplus pallets helps recover part of the investment and frees up warehouse space. The proceeds can fund new packaging solutions, reducing capital expenditure.

Planning pickups and implementing return systems further lowers operational costs and improves material flow in supply chains. Repair systems extend pallet lifespans and enable better resource management.

➔ Environmental Benefits

Repairing and reselling pallets reduces wood demand and deforestation. Less waste ends up in landfills, cutting CO₂ emissions from disposal. Companies adopting zero-waste strategies—where pallets are repaired, reused, or repurposed—gain favour with eco-conscious customers.

➔ Logistical Benefits

Return systems streamline packaging flow. Many companies now use reusable carriers that are returned to suppliers or repaired and sold to others. This reduces demand for new pallets, frees up storage space, and supports sustainable operations.





Valuing used carriers - the first step to recovery

Quality Analysis

At Rotom, we ensure precise assessment of packaging quality and quantity to offer fair pricing. We inspect the technical condition of items for sale, sort them, and prepare a detailed report including pallet count, dimensions, and condition. Based on this, we present a buyback offer—ensuring transparency for both parties.

Buying Damaged Pallets

We also purchase damaged pallets, which often make up the bulk of returns. Most are repairable; some are treated as waste due to severe damage. We use parts from these for pallet regeneration, minimizing waste.

Selling Old and Buying New Packaging

If your business needs different packaging than previously used, we offer buyback of old units and delivery of new ones. As both manufacturer and buyer, we tailor pickup plans to your business needs, ensuring smooth transitions without disrupting operations. We guarantee synchronization, competitive pricing, and seamless switch to new carriers. You can combine buyback with discounted purchases of pallets, collars, trolleys, etc.





Repairing pallets

With rising material costs and stricter environmental regulations, companies seek sustainable logistics solutions. In 2025, lumber prices in Europe rose by over 24.17%, reaching \$276/m³ due to limited supply, export bans, and high construction demand.

One of the most effective yet underrated ways to cut costs and environmental impact is regular repair of transport packaging. It extends product life, saves trees, and reduces energy used in manufacturing and transport.



What Does Sustainable Pallet Repair Look Like?

Repair involves replacing damaged parts and reinforcing boards or blocks with extra nails. Though simple, the process relies on semi-automated repair lines and skilled workers for speed and efficiency—boosting the competitiveness of used pallets.

We also recover parts from irreparable pallets, reducing wood consumption and pallet waste.

A large share of repaired units are EPAL pallets. We hold an EPAL license, allowing us to repair them per PKN EPAL standards.



Economic Considerations

Given the high cost of new pallets, effective repair helps delay or avoid purchases. Regular maintenance of wooden pallets and roll containers ensures longevity and safety for handlers.

Repair directly translates into financial savings:

- Reduces the need for new carriers, lowering operational costs
- Delays investments, freeing resources for other priorities
- Optimizes packaging lifecycle through regular upkeep

For businesses with a sustainable approach, repair is a highly attractive alternative.

Safety Considerations

Wooden pallets are heavily used and prone to damage. Such damage poses risks to workers and goods. Maintaining pallet quality also prevents workplace hazards like splinters and debris.

Sustainable Recycling

What Happens to Unusable Packaging?

With increasing legal pressure and complex waste regulations, many companies struggle with effective recycling. Rotom offers a comprehensive, sustainable approach to managing worn-out carriers—helping clients handle waste responsibly and cut operational costs.

Unrepairable packaging is dismantled, and recovered materials are sent for recycling. This recovers value, reduces disposal costs, and supports the circular economy. Rotom provides documentation confirming recycling, helping clients reduce product fees and meet legal waste reporting obligations.

Additional Sustainable Services

- Buyback of used packaging to reduce disposal costs
- Seamless exchange for new or refurbished carriers
- Recycling with full documentation to lower product fees
- Delivery of new packaging alongside buyback
- Packaging flow management aligned with sustainability policies

These solutions save time and money while actively supporting environmental protection and responsible logistics recycling.



Sale and rental of used carriers

Selling used pallets is practical and profitable, offering financial and organizational benefits. Even damaged pallets hold market value, helping recover costs and free up warehouse space.

Sales also support eco-friendly practices by enabling recycling or repair and reducing waste.

Rental - sharing existing logistic carriers

If companies need extra pallets temporarily—e.g., during production peaks—rental is ideal. It avoids the cost of buying expensive new packaging. Rental provides access to existing carriers without storage or maintenance, allowing focus on core operations. It also reduces environmental impact from new packaging production.





Case study #1 Retail sector

The client is a network of supermarkets and convenience stores operating in Belgium, offering both traditional formats and convenient online shopping with pick-up or home delivery options. The brand provides customers with over 20,000 high-quality products across eight private label lines, combining competitive pricing with a sustainable business approach.

As a retailer, they collaborate with Rotom, selling back approximately 20,000 pallets per month – including Euro pallets, various types of wooden pallets (120×80 / 120×100 cm), and selected plastic pallets.

Challenge

The large volume and variety of pallet types required a structured and repeatable collection process that wouldn't disrupt the client's operations. Transparent accounting and rapid clearing of warehouse space were also essential to avoid bottlenecks in daily activities.

Solution

Rotom signed a pallet collection agreement with the client based on a fixed trailer stationed at their premises. The client loads the trailer at their own pace, and we replace it with an empty one – either on a scheduled basis or via on-demand transport. This ensures smooth collections and keeps the client's operational space free from excess pallets.

Collected pallets are transported to Rotom's facility, where they are sorted by type and quality. The client then receives compensation based on the quantity and type of pallets delivered.



Results

Implementing the fixed trailer model enabled:

- A stable volume of approx. 20,000 pallets per month
- Fast, uninterrupted collections without overloading the client's warehouse
- Efficient sorting and reuse of various pallet types
- Transparent settlements based on actual sorting results

This model provided the client with a convenient, consistent pallet handover process and gave Rotom a predictable stream of materials for further use.



Case study #2 Delivery Sector

The client operates in the parcel delivery industry in the Netherlands and, through ongoing cooperation with Rotom, sells back approximately 360,000 pallets annually.

These are mainly 1200×800 mm and 1200×1000 mm pallets, with a small portion (<5%) including 1200×1200 mm, CP pallets, EPAL pallets requiring repair, and minor quantities of scrap pallets. Rotom manages operations at two of the client's locations

Challenge

The goal was to ensure daily, seamless collection of a large volume of pallets from two sites while maintaining high flexibility during peak periods like Black Friday. The client also expected simple, predictable settlements and constant operational readiness without blocking ramp space.

Solution

Rotom organized daily pallet loading at the client's sites and stationed two trailers at each location. Operational teams stay in direct contact with our customer service – when volume spikes occur, we dispatch additional trailers so pallets can be loaded immediately without delay.

The settlement model is fixed and transparent – a set price per pallet, eliminating the need for sorting-based billing.



Results

We've built a long-term, stable partnership where daily trailer availability and quick response to volume spikes ensure continuous collections and no congestion. The fixed pallet price gives the client cost predictability, while we benefit from clear operational parameters.

As both sides scale up, joint planning and close communication remain key – especially during high-demand seasons – to stay agile and maintain process fluidity.



Case study #3 Recycling Sector Pallet Flow Optimization

The client operates in the waste management and recycling sector, servicing multiple locations across Poland and working with major brands in the furniture, automotive, and e-commerce industries.

The company is characterized by a high operational scale, large material flow volumes, and a need for efficient wooden packaging management.

Challenge

The client needed a partner to ensure regular pallet collection from various locations in Poland, enable value recovery from single-use and EPAL pallets, and guarantee transparent settlements. Due to the large operational scale, support in material sorting – both at the client's site and logistics center – was also crucial.

Solution

To meet the client's needs, we implemented a collaboration model based on flexible logistics, daily sorting, and transparent settlements. Collections are carried out using our own transport or via trailer exchange upon filling. Materials are sorted either on-site or at our facility, and results are sent directly to the client.

Each delivery concludes with a report detailing pallet type, quantity, and technical condition, which forms the basis for the buyback offer.

Results

The implemented model delivered tangible benefits:

- Regular monthly pallet collections, totaling 7,000 to 12,000 units annually, ensured operational stability and predictable logistics
- On-site material sorting and recovery of usable components significantly reduced wooden waste and increased the value of recovered packaging
- The scale of operations confirms the solution's effectiveness – 127 transports were completed in 2024, and 111 by the end of July 2025, demonstrating efficient material flow management

This approach aligns with the client's sustainability strategy, supporting responsible resource management.



Summary

The valuation, repair, and resale services for used logistics packaging presented in this material enable companies to achieve tangible cost optimization, improve operational efficiency, and meet their sustainability goals.

The benefits of selling used pallets go beyond the financial compensation received. They also include reduced environmental fees, a measurable decrease in CO₂ emissions, and reclaimed warehouse space, which should serve more strategic purposes than storing pallets that are no longer in use.

By partnering with Rotom, you gain the assurance that the pallets you hand over will be professionally sorted, repaired, and reintroduced into circulation by other companies. You'll receive a detailed report outlining the exact quantity and condition of the collected pallets. Our repair process is carried out sustainably, using components salvaged from irreparable pallets.

Thanks to a comprehensive approach to carrier management, it is possible not only to extend their lifecycle but also to recover value from resources that would otherwise be treated as waste in a traditional model. This solution combines business pragmatism with environmental responsibility, serving as a first step toward a circular packaging economy.



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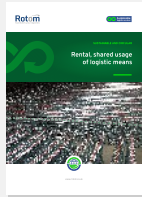
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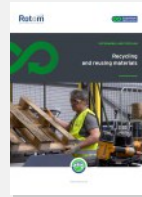
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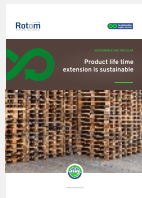
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Unit 24 Dosco Industrial Estate
Ollerton Road, Tuxford
Nottingham, NG22 0PQ

Phone 01777 322100
Email: info@rotom.co.uk

[CONTACT US](#)



De Waal 18D
5684 PH Best
Netherlands

Phone : + 31 (0)499 496 590
Email: info@2return.nl