

## Sample Pages

Natalie Rudolph, Raphael Kiesel, Chuanchom Aumnate

### Understanding Plastics Recycling

Economic, Ecological, and Technical Aspects of Plastic Waste Handling

Book ISBN: 978-1-56990-676-7

eBook ISBN: 978-1-56990-677-4

**For further information and order see**

[www.hanserpublications.com](http://www.hanserpublications.com) (in the Americas)

[www.hanser-fachbuch.de](http://www.hanser-fachbuch.de) (outside the Americas)

# Preface

Thank you for taking the time to read this book on plastic recycling. We hope you benefit from reading our summary and research regarding this topic. With different backgrounds and states in our scientific careers, we are united by the interest in using our knowledge to educate and make the world a little better—one topic and one word at a time.

It all began when I had started as an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a new potential graduate student was sitting in front of me to discuss our collaboration. With many topics in my head and finally a position where I could explore topics close to my heart, Chuanchom Aumnate wanted to work on recycling of plastics. I thought to myself that I should probably still wait some more years with such a topic, get more established first, and then start working on it.

But in reality, I could not resist and we started formulating a project. Our aim was to focus on a topic that would make an impact and could solve problems around the globe. We decided to start with plastic packaging, due to its huge worldwide market share, and wanted to investigate the necessity of sorting, a process which is still immature for typical packaging materials and therefore limits the amount of recycled plastic.

Thus we worked on blending of typical packaging materials like polypropylene and polyethylene as an alternative for the sorting process to increase the amount of recycled plastic waste. We used scientific as well as industrial tests to analyze the resulting material properties. Our goal was to identify promising combinations as well as practical test methods for their analysis.

Very early on we realized that in addition to our technical study, we needed to understand the cost benefit of eliminating the sorting process and compare it to both conventional recycling and other waste management strategies. We could expand our work when Raphael Kiesel, on a scholarship from Germany, came to UW-Madison and decided to work on this topic. He combines the solid technical and business background needed to look at all of those aspects in combination. Soon after Raphael started on the topic, we realized that all of us were driven by understand-

ing recycling holistically—including the technical, economic, and ecological advantages and disadvantages.

The idea for the book was born from my colleague and mentor, Prof. Tim A. Osswald, when he attended Raphael's Master defense and suggested that we should publish our very interesting analysis in a book to reach a broader audience. And this is what we did.

We compiled our own analysis results together with data from other research groups and summarized it in the present book.

The book starts with a general overview of waste handling strategies and their shares of the U.S. market are presented (Chapters 1 and 2). In Chapter 3 special focus is placed on the technical aspects of recycling for various applications and specific polymers.

In separate chapters their economic (Chapter 4) and ecological value and costs (Chapter 5) are evaluated and compared. The analysis shows the advantages of plastic recycling as well as the necessary boundary conditions for future growth. In Chapter 6 different scenarios to increase the profitability of recycling are analyzed and blending of plastic materials is identified as a suitable strategy.

Last but not least, the findings for the U.S. are put into context to the worldwide potential for waste handling and in particular plastic recycling using Europe and China as examples in Chapter 7. All the data and calculations presented in the book and summarized in the tables in the Appendix in Chapter 8 can be downloaded as spreadsheets for the reader's own analysis and updates in a fast changing economy.

Thus, the book is an entry level book for decision makers in the plastics industry as well as students, researchers, and industry experts new to the field of plastic recycling.

True to our mission, this book is printed on recycled paper. We hope you enjoy reading it.

Madison, March 2017

*Natalie Rudolph*

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>V</b>
<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>VII</b>
<b>Acronyms and Other Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>XIII</b>
<b>1 All About the Waste</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Municipal Solid Waste—A Daily Companion .....	1
1.2 Management Methods for Municipal Solid Waste .....	3
1.2.1 Landfilling .....	4
1.2.2 Incineration with Energy Recovery (Waste-to-Energy) .....	5
1.2.3 Recycling .....	7
<b>2 Plastics—Increasing Value, Decreasing Lifetime</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>3 Plastics Recycling—Conservation of Valuable Resources</b> .....	<b>13</b>
3.1 Plastics Recycling Methods .....	14
3.1.1 Mechanical Recycling .....	14
3.1.2 Chemical Recycling .....	15
3.2 Recycling Different Types of Plastic Waste .....	15
3.2.1 Preconsumer Waste .....	15
3.2.1.1 Manufacturing Scrap .....	15
3.2.1.2 Dilution Effect .....	15
3.2.2 Postconsumer Waste .....	17
3.2.2.1 Packaging Plastic Waste .....	19
3.2.2.2 Building and Construction Plastic Waste .....	20
3.2.2.3 Automotive Plastic Waste .....	21
3.2.2.4 Agricultural Plastic Waste .....	21
3.2.2.5 Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) .....	22

3.3	Sorting Processes for Plastic Waste .....	23
3.3.1	Manual Sorting .....	23
3.3.2	Automated Sorting .....	23
3.3.2.1	Float-and-Sink Sorting .....	23
3.3.2.2	Froth-Flotation Sorting .....	24
3.3.2.3	Near-Infrared Sorting .....	24
3.3.2.4	X-Ray Fluorescence .....	24
3.3.2.5	Laser-Aided Identification .....	24
3.3.2.6	Marker Systems .....	24
3.4	Plastic Degradation Mechanisms .....	25
3.4.1	Mechanical Degradation .....	26
3.4.2	Thermal Degradation .....	26
3.4.3	Thermal Oxidative Degradation .....	27
3.4.4	Effect of Degradation on Processing and Service-Life Properties .....	27
3.5	Contaminants .....	35
3.6	Conclusion: Technical Feasibility of Plastics Recycling .....	35
<b>4</b>	<b>Economic Analysis of Plastic Waste Handling .....</b>	<b>39</b>
4.1	Fundamentals of Economic Analysis .....	39
4.1.1	Economic Efficiency Calculation .....	39
4.1.2	Static Economic Efficiency Calculation .....	40
4.1.3	Profit Comparison Method .....	40
4.2	Economic Analysis of Landfilling .....	41
4.3	Economic Analysis of Incineration with Energy Recovery (Waste-to-Energy Facilities) .....	46
4.4	Economic Analysis of Plastics Recycling .....	50
4.4.1	Materials Recovery Facility Costs .....	51
4.4.2	Plastic Reprocessing Costs .....	55
4.4.3	Revenues from Selling Recycled Plastic .....	58
4.4.4	Profitability .....	59
4.4.5	Oil Price as a Factor in Profitability of Plastics Recycling .....	59
4.5	Conclusion: Economical Feasibility of Plastics Recycling .....	62
<b>5</b>	<b>Environmental Analysis of Plastic Waste Handling .....</b>	<b>67</b>
5.1	Environmental Analysis of Landfilling .....	67
5.2	Environmental Analysis of Incineration with Energy Recovery (Waste-to-Energy Facilities) .....	69
5.3	Environmental Analysis of Recycling .....	70
5.4	Conclusion: Environmental Necessity of Plastics Recycling .....	72

<b>6 Optimization of Plastics Recycling</b>	<b>75</b>
6.1 Optimization I: Reduction of Sorting Processes	75
6.2 Optimization II: Upcycling of Plastic Waste by Blending	78
6.2.1 Additional Costs of LDPE-PP Recycling	81
6.2.2 Additional Revenues of LDPE-PP Recycling	83
6.2.3 Total Profit of Optimization II	83
6.3 Optimization III: Increasing the Recycling Rate	85
<b>7 Plastic Waste of the World: Increasing Potential of Recycling</b>	<b>87</b>
7.1 Plastic Waste Handling in Europe	90
7.2 Plastic Waste Handling in China	95
7.3 Plastic Waste in the Future	100
<b>8 Appendix</b>	<b>103</b>
8.1 Economic Analysis of Landfilling	104
8.2 Economic Analysis of WTE	107
8.3 Economic Analysis of Recycling	109
8.4 Optimization I: Reduction of Sorting Processes	112
8.5 Optimization II: Upcycling of Plastic Waste by Blending	113
<b>Index</b>	<b>115</b>

directly related to the price of virgin resins for that type of plastic, which is related to the price of oil (see Section 4.4.5). Low oil prices result in low costs for the virgin resins. In these times, recycled resins are too expensive to be used by comparison, and the recycling rates drop. Therefore, the goal of any sustainable growth in recycling should be the maximization of efficiency of energy utilization in every step of the process, from the initial production of plastic goods to the disposal or recovery of plastic wastes. [2]

## 3.1 Plastics Recycling Methods

There are three common methods for plastics recycling: *mechanical recycling* (primary and secondary recycling) and *chemical recycling* (tertiary recycling). Based on the degree of contamination of the plastics (Section 3.5) with organic or inorganic substances (other polymers or impurities), one of these three recycling methods is chosen. The molecular structure of the plastics as well as existing cross-links, such as in thermosets or rubbers, also influence the decision process. [3, 4]

### 3.1.1 Mechanical Recycling

Amongst the recycling methods, mechanical recycling is the most desirable approach because of its low cost and high reliability. In general, mechanical recycling keeps the molecular structure of the polymer molecule basically intact. After grinding of the plastics waste material, the main processing step is remelting of the regrind material, which limits the use of mechanical recycling to thermoplastic polymers. Since remelting causes a degradation of the polymer chain, virgin material is often mixed with recycled material to reduce the effects of degradation on the product properties. The mixing leads to a dilution of the virgin material, which is described in Section 3.2.1.2. [5]

Mechanical recycling is divided into primary and secondary mechanical recycling, depending on whether the source of the waste is preconsumer or postconsumer, respectively. Preconsumer manufacturing scrap plastic is usually clean and of a single type or at least of a known composition and requires no further treatment, whereas postconsumer waste is highly contaminated and requires additional steps like collecting, sorting, and cleaning.

### 3.1.2 Chemical Recycling

*Chemical recycling* is used for *cross-linked polymers* or for thermoplastic polymers if no sufficient quality can be achieved using mechanical recycling. Chemical processes are used to convert the polymer chains to *low molecular weight* compounds or, in some cases, the original plastic monomer (feedstock). The monomers can be used for polymerization to generate the original polymer again, whereas the low molecular weight compounds are used as feedstock for the petrochemical industry. Common processes for this recycling method are hydrolysis, hydrocracking, and depolymerization. Because of the large amounts of energy and chemicals consumed by these processes, chemical recycling is only economically and ecologically reasonable for a very limited number of polymers such as polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) and polyether ether ketone (PEEK). Chemical recycling of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) has been successfully developed. However, it is hindered by the processing cost. Furthermore, the chemical processing has been proven to be technically possible for polyolefins but is still in the laboratory stage of development. [3, 4, 6, 7, 8]

## ■ 3.2 Recycling Different Types of Plastic Waste

As mentioned before, plastic waste can be divided into *preconsumer waste* (manufacturing scrap) and *postconsumer waste* (recovered waste). These different plastic waste types are recycled differently.

### 3.2.1 Preconsumer Waste

#### 3.2.1.1 Manufacturing Scrap

Preconsumer waste, such as runners, gates, sprues, and trimming, is normally recycled using primary mechanical recycling. It is ground and remelted in-house.

#### 3.2.1.2 Dilution Effect

Manufacturing scrap is often mixed into virgin material to reduce material cost while at the same time minimizing the effects of degradation on part performance. Depending on the mixing ratio, either the virgin material is diluted with regrind or the regrind is refreshed with virgin material. By using a constant mixing ratio during continuous processing, the regrind waste itself is diluted by material that

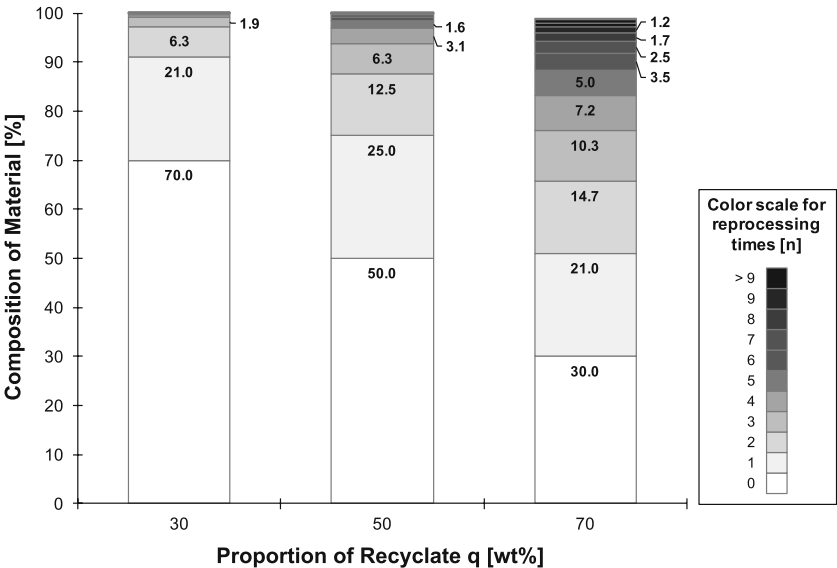


has been reprocessed once, twice, three times, etc. The composition of a material with a proportion of recyclate  $q$  after  $n$  processing cycles can be calculated using Equation (3.1).

$$\sum_{i=1}^n q^{n-i} (1-q) = 1 \tag{3.1}$$

For small proportions of recyclate, the regrind material contains only minimal amounts of material that has passed through a large number of processing cycles and therefore is highly degraded.

Figure 3.1 shows the composition of material with different mixing ratios of recycled and virgin material. The first column shows 30% recycled and 70% virgin material. Under these conditions, the regrind material contains less than 0.8% of material that has been reprocessed five times or more. Seventy percent of the material is virgin material, 21% has been processed once, 6.3% twice, and 1.9% three times. As proportions of material smaller than 1% do not have a significant influence on the material properties and can be neglected [9], the properties will be dominated by fractions that have been processed four times or less. Thus, it can be concluded that the properties of a material with small amounts of recyclate will not fall below a certain level. [10]



**Figure 3.1** Composition of recycled plastics material after  $n$  reprocessing steps for 30%, 50%, and 70% recycled material

Another controversial subject of waste-to-energy plants, more than any other plastic handling method, is noise. Trucks bringing solid waste to the facility, plant operations, and fans are sources of noise pollution. [21]

The biggest issue of burning plastic is the generation of pollutants, especially CO<sub>2</sub>. Since plastic is created from a fossil fuel, its combustion is considered an anthropogenic source of carbon emissions. An EPA study revealed that incinerators are the dirtiest electricity production option, releasing more greenhouse gases than coal-fired power stations per unit of energy generated.

Table 5.1 shows the *net emission factor* for combustion of 1 t of high-density polyethylene (HDPE), low-density polyethylene (LDPE), and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) in metric tons of a carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO<sub>2</sub>E)<sup>1</sup> calculated using the EPA's *Waste Reduction Model (WARM)*. This factor includes the emissions associated with transporting (903 km per shipment) the plastic waste to WTE facilities and emission savings associated with the avoided emissions of burning conventional fossil fuels for utilities. It shows that the production of greenhouse gases through waste combustion is much higher than the emission savings. [11, 22]

**Table 5.1** Net Emissions Factor Due to Combustion for Various Plastics

Material	Transportation to Combustion [MtCO <sub>2</sub> E/t]	CO <sub>2</sub> from Combustion [MtCO <sub>2</sub> E/t]	Utility Emissions Avoided [MtCO <sub>2</sub> E/t]	Net Emissions Factor [MtCO <sub>2</sub> E/t]
HDPE	0.033	3.075	-1.664	1.444
LDPE	0.033	3.075	-1.664	1.444
PET	0.033	2.249	-0.871	1.411

CO<sub>2</sub>, dioxins, and particles contribute to negative effects for the environment, such as climate change, smog, and acidification, and for the human body, such as asthma, lung damage, cardiac problems, and nervous system damage. [15, 23]

### ■ 5.3 Environmental Analysis of Recycling

The recycling rate of plastic materials in 2013 was 9.2%, much lower than the recycling rate of the general MSW (34.2%). Despite this low rate, plastic recycling has a big positive ecological impact: it provides opportunities to reduce quantities of waste requiring disposal, oil usage, and carbon dioxide emissions. [16, 24]

<sup>1</sup> MtCO<sub>2</sub>E (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent): This describes how much global warming a given type and amount of greenhouse gas causes using the equivalent of CO<sub>2</sub> as a reference.

Recycling of plastics means waste reduction. In 2013, the total plastic waste produced was 35.5 million tons. Even at the relatively low recycling rate of 9.2%, it means 3.27 million tons were neither landfilled nor burned, thus not polluting the environment. [16, 25]

Furthermore, plastic recycling is equivalent to the reuse of scarce resources, especially oil. Nowadays, plastics are almost completely derived from petrochemicals, which are produced from fossil oil and gas. Since manufacturing of plastics also requires energy, a similar additional quantity of fossil fuels is used for their production. Reprocessing plastics is consequently the same as reuse of this important resource. [24]

The key benefit of recycling plastic is *the reduction of required plastics production*: less production means less energy use, which simultaneously leads to the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse gas emissions. Considering the difference between the energy use for producing virgin PET and HDPE and for reprocessing these products at the end of their life, recycling only these two plastics in the United States could save enough energy each year to power 750,000 homes. [26]

**Table 5.2** Net Emissions Factor Due to Combustion and Energy Savings for Recycled versus Virgin Plastics

		HDPE	LDPE	PET
Virgin input [MtCO <sub>2</sub> E/t]	Process energy	1.560	1.905	1.796
	Transportation energy	0.036	0.036	0.036
	Process non-energy	0.172	0.172	0.100
Recycled input [MtCO <sub>2</sub> E/t]	Process energy	0.118	0.118	0.118
	Transportation energy	0.045	0.045	0.045
	Process non-energy	—	—	—
Savings by recycling [MtCO <sub>2</sub> E/t]	Process energy	− 1.442	− 1.787	− 1.678
	Transportation energy	0.009	0.009	0.009
	Process non-energy	− 0.172	− 0.172	− 0.100
	<b>Total savings</b>	<b>− 1.605</b>	<b>− 1.950</b>	<b>− 1.769</b>

Table 5.2 shows the difference between emissions from manufacturing 100% virgin material and 100% recycled material, calculated using the WARM method, which breaks down the emission into

- Process energy emissions
- Transportation emissions
- Process non-energy emissions

It can be seen that manufacturing of recycled HPDE, LDPE, and PET significantly reduces GHG emissions compared to producing the same amount of virgin material. Among these plastics, LDPE recycling shows the largest GHG emission savings. [11, 26]

Reduction of waste, energy use, and GHG emissions are several positive effects of recycling plastics on the environment. These positive ecological impacts are reflected in the EPA's waste management hierarchy, which superordinates recycling to incineration and landfilling of plastics waste. [16, 25]

## ■ 5.4 Conclusion: Environmental Necessity of Plastics Recycling

Considering all waste handling options from an ecological point of view, it has been established that recycling clearly is the best way to handle plastic waste. Besides the reduction of waste, it leads to energy savings and decreased GHG emissions.

Recycling is not only a waste management strategy; it further implements the concept of industrial ecology, that there is no waste but only new products. [27]

On this account, the recycling process needs to be improved so that it is both ecologically and economically desirable. Therefore, Chapter 6 will consider two different ways of economically improving the plastics recycling process and making it even more indispensable from an ecological perspective.

### References

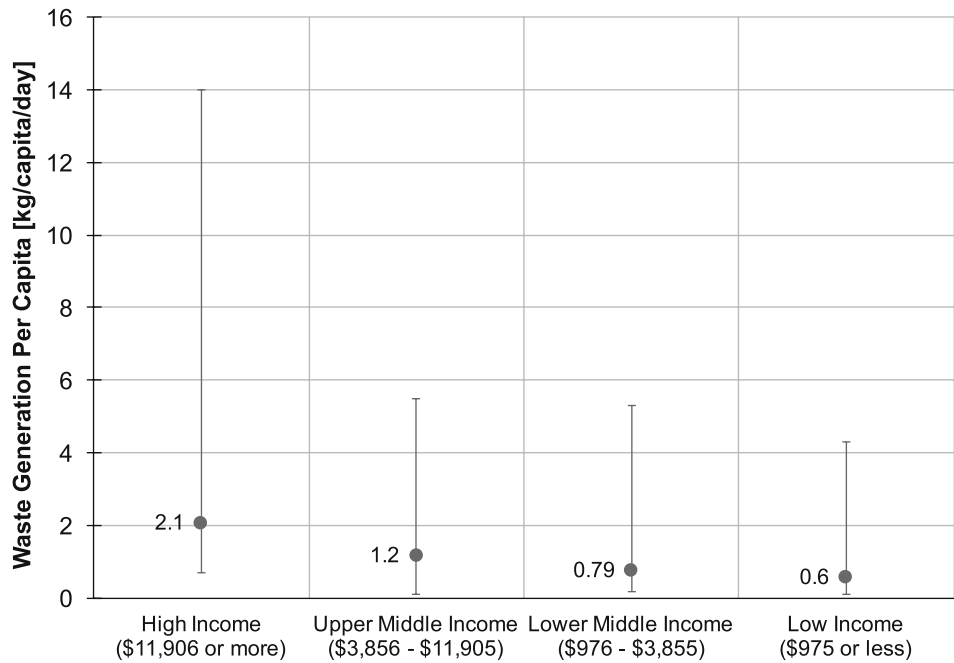
- [1] Project MainStream. *The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future of Plastics*. Ellen MacArthur Foundation, The World Economic Forum, and McKinsey & Company. 2016.
- [2] United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990 – 2013*. Washington, D.C. 2015.
- [3] Powell, J. T., Townsend, T. G., and Zimmermann, J. B. Estimates of solid waste disposal rates and reduction targets for landfill gas emissions. *Nature Climate Change*. vol. 6, pp. 162 – 166, 2016.
- [4] Statista. *Number of municipal waste landfills in the U.S. from 1990 to 2013*. 2015. Available: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/193813/number-of-municipal-solid-waste-landfills-in-the-us-since-1990/>
- [5] United States Senate. *Solid Waste Disposal Act (RCRA)*. Washington, D. C. 2002.
- [6] Themelis, N., and Ulloa, P. Capture and utilization of landfill gas. *Renewable Energy*. pp. 77 – 81, 2005.
- [7] National Solid Wastes Management Association. *Modern Landfills: A Far Cry from the Past*. Washington, D.C. 2008.
- [8] United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). *Regulatory Impact Analysis for the Proposed Revisions to the Emission Guidelines for Existing Sources and Supplemental Proposed New Source Performance Standards in the Municipal Solid Waste Landfills Sector*. Washington, D.C. 2015.
- [9] Scharff, H., van Zomeren, A., and van der Sloten, H. A. Landfill sustainability and aftercare completion criteria. *Waste Management & Research*. vol. 29, pp. 30 – 40, 2011.

# 7

## Plastic Waste of the World: Increasing Potential of Recycling

In addition to the detailed analysis of the plastics recycling market and its potential future, this book provides an outlook on waste handling and recycling in the global market. In order to understand the global effects of waste generation in general and plastics in particular, differentiating between countries by income is more useful than by geographic region. The following data was collected in the 2012 report on global solid waste management by the World Bank. [1] The numbers are only estimates because the data from some countries was missing, was from different years, and was based on slightly different assessment methodologies. Figure 7.1 shows the dependence of waste generation on income level. Low-income countries produce the least and high-income countries the most solid waste per capita. The wide ranges, such as from 0.7 to 14 kg/capita/day for high-income-level countries, result from disparities within the income-level groups. The waste generated is projected to grow in all geographic areas and income levels due to the increase in population and urbanization. However, the higher the income level of a country, the lower is its projected growth rate of waste generation.

Waste collection is instrumental to access the resources buried inside the waste. However, collection rates vary between 41% in low-income countries and 98% in high-income countries, mainly due to the associated cost of collection. In low-income countries, collection services account for 80 to 90% of the municipal solid waste (MSW) budget. In high-income countries, they can be as low as 10% of the MSW budget. Consumers can be required to separate their waste at the source, such as into different bins, or the unsegregated waste can be separated in sorting facilities. Developing countries use mainly single-stream systems where recyclables are collected by waste pickers during the collection process, starting prior to collection and ending at the disposal sites. In high-income countries, single-stream or multiple-stream systems, such as a combination of curbside pickup and community bins, are used, where collection is frequent and sorting facilities are highly mechanized and efficient. The total amount of recyclables and their quality depend on the degree of separation.



**Figure 7.1** Current waste generation per capita by income level (showing the upper and lower limits and the median [dot] waste generation) [1]

The *waste composition* is important to estimate the potential of recycling valuable resources and of energy recovery. Waste composition influences the frequency of collection and disposal and is impacted by factors such as economic development, climate, energy sources, and cultural norms.

As shown in Figure 7.2, the organic fraction tends to be highest in low-income countries and lowest in high-income countries. With progressing urbanization and increase in wealth of a population, more inorganic materials (plastics, paper, and aluminum) are consumed. It is important to note that the total amount of organic waste per capita is on average still 1.5 times higher in high-income countries than in low-income countries. The same is true for all other fractions; for example, the total amount of plastic waste and paper waste is 4.9 times and 22 times higher, respectively. Geography and climate influence the waste composition. It determines the use of building materials (e.g., wood, brick, or steel), horticultural waste, and ash content. The last is related to the predominant energy source as well. Regions where energy for cooking, heating, and lighting is generated by coal and wood fires have a much higher ash content. See, for example, Figure 7.11, which shows the breakdown of waste in China for 2000, where the ash content is included in “Other”.

# Index

## A

accidents 45  
agricultural applications 21  
area fill method 4  
automated sorting 23  
automotive applications 21

## B

bale breaker 56  
baler 53  
biodegradable plastics 68  
bottle collectors 99  
break-even price 61  
building and construction industry 20

## C

capital budgeting 39  
capital cost 41  
carbon emissions 70  
chemical recycling 14, 15  
China, recycling system in 99  
Closed Loop Fund (CLF) 85  
closure costs 44  
combustion. *See* incineration  
– profit from 49  
– revenues from 48

construction costs 43  
contaminants 35  
correlation coefficient 61  
costs 41, 76  
cross-linked polymers 15

## D

debris roll screen 53  
degradation  
– kinetics 26  
– mechanical 25, 26  
– photo 26  
– process 25  
– thermal 25, 26  
– thermal oxidative 25, 26, 27  
density 19, 23  
deposit and return system 94  
dilution 15  
dual-stream recycling 75  
dynamic methods 40

## E

economic efficiency  
– calculation 39  
– fundamentals 39  
economic potential of plastics recycling 100  
eddy current separator 53

electrical and electronic equipment waste 22  
energy source 97  
environmental aspects 67  
environmental burdens 89  
Europe, recycling system in 90  
extruded polystyrene (XPS) 95  
extrusion 56

## F

fixed costs 41  
float-and-sink process 23  
flow behavior 26  
froth-flotation process 24

## G

Germany, recycling system in 94  
global effects 87  
green dot (Grüner Punkt) 94  
greenhouse gas 68, 70  
– emissions 71, 89

## H

high-density polyethylene (HDPE) 10, 17

**I**

impact strength 78  
 incineration with energy recovery 3, 5  
 initial investment cost 41  
 investment costs 42, 46, 57, 76

**L**

landfill 3, 4, 41  
 – cleanup 45  
 – closure costs 44  
 – construction costs 41, 42  
 – investment costs 42  
 – operating and maintenance costs 43  
 – profit of 41  
 – sizes 4  
 laser-aided systems 24  
 LDPE-PP recycling process  
 – revenues of 83  
 leachate 68  
 loader 56  
 low-density polyethylene (LDPE) 10, 18

**M**

maintenance costs 44, 47, 57, 77  
 manual sorting 23, 53  
 marine pollution 68, 99  
 marker systems 24  
 market for postconsumer plastic waste 95  
 mass-burn facility.  
   See incineration with energy recovery  
 materials recovery facility (MRF) 51  
 – investment costs 54

– operating and maintenance costs 54  
 material tests 79  
 mechanical recycling 14  
 – primary 14  
 – secondary 14  
 melt flow index (MFI) 29, 79  
 melt viscosity 26  
 metering bin 52, 56  
 Microplastics. *See* marine pollution  
 molecular weight 15  
 municipal solid waste (MSW) 1

**N**

near-infrared (NIR) sorting 24  
 net emission factor 70  
 newspaper screen 53

**O**

oil 11, 59, 60  
 old corrugated cardboard (OCC) screen 53  
 open burning 89  
 open dumps. *See* open burning  
 operating costs 43, 47, 57, 77  
 optical sorting 53

**P**

packaging  
 – applications 19  
 – materials 9  
 – waste 19  
 Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient 60

personnel costs 47, 52, 55, 57, 77, 82  
 PET recycling process  
 – extension 78  
 – revenues from 58  
 plastic applications 18  
 plastic processing facility 55  
 plastics production 59  
 – Europe 90  
 – growth 9  
 plastics recycling. *See* recycling, plastics  
 – methods 14  
 – process 50  
 plastic waste  
 – reduction of 69  
 polishing screen 53  
 pollutants 70  
 polyethylene terephthalate 17  
 polymer degradation 25  
 polypropylene (PP) 10, 18  
 polystyrene 18  
 polyvinyl chloride 17  
 postclosure costs 44  
 postconsumer plastic waste 13, 15, 17  
 – market for 95  
 preconsumer plastic waste 13, 15  
 price correlations between PET and oil 60  
 process energy emissions 71  
 process non-energy emissions 71  
 profitability 39, 59  
 – absolute 40, 41  
 – relative 40, 41  
 – types 40  
 profit comparison method (PCM) 40  
 profit of handling plastic waste 62



purchasing power parity  
  (PPP) 46  
pyrolysis 6

## R

recycling 3  
  – deterioration of performance 35  
  – mixed plastics 13  
  – plastics 13, 50  
  – potential 100  
  – rate 13  
reduction of plastics  
  production 71  
reduction of plastic waste  
  69  
reprocessing 13  
reprocessors 99  
resin code 17  
Resource Conservation  
  and Recovery Act  
  (RCRA) 4  
rLDPE–rPP  
  – blending of 79, 100  
  – selling price of 83, 84

## S

scarce resources, loss of  
  68  
scarcity of land 68  
service life 19  
single-use products 10,  
  92  
sorting 23, 53  
static methods 39  
stress cracking 78

## T

thermochemical decomposition 6  
transportation emissions  
  71  
trench method 4

## V

variable cost 41

## W

waste composition  
  – world 88  
waste generation  
  – dependence on income  
    level 87  
  – global effects 87  
waste handling 3  
  – in China 95  
  – in Europe 90  
waste reduction 71  
Waste Reduction Model  
  (WARM) 70  
waste-to-energy (WTE).  
  See incineration with  
    energy recovery  
wet granulator 56

## X

X-ray fluorescence 24