

MUNICIPAL WASTE

The amount of municipal waste generated in a country is related to the rate of urbanisation, the types and patterns of consumption, household revenue and lifestyles. While municipal waste is only one part of total waste generated in each country, its management and treatment often absorbs more than one third of the public sector's financial efforts to abate and control pollution.

The main concerns raised by municipal waste are the potential impacts from inappropriate waste management on human health and the environment (soil and water contamination, air quality, land use and landscape).

Definition

Municipal waste is waste collected and treated by or for municipalities. It covers waste from households, including bulky waste, similar waste from commerce and trade, office buildings, institutions and small businesses, as well as yard and garden waste, street sweepings, the contents of litter containers, and market cleansing waste if managed as household waste. The definition excludes waste from municipal sewage networks and treatment, as well as waste from construction and demolition activities.

The kilogrammes of municipal waste per capita produced each year – or “waste generation intensities” – provide one broad indicator of the potential environmental and health pressures from municipal waste. They should be complemented with information on waste management practices and costs, and on consumption levels and patterns.

Comparability

The definition of municipal waste and the surveying methods used to collect information vary from country to country and over time. Breaks in time series exist for: the

Overview

The quantity of municipal waste generated in the OECD area has risen strongly since 1980, and exceeded an estimated 660 million tonnes in 2011 (530 kg per capita).

In most countries for which data are available, increased affluence, associated with economic growth, and changes in consumption patterns tend to generate higher rates of waste per capita. Over the past twenty years, waste generation has however risen at a lower rate than private final consumption expenditure and GDP, with a slowdown in recent years.

The amount and composition of municipal waste going to final disposal depends on national waste management practices. Despite improvements in these practices, only a few countries have succeeded in reducing the quantity of solid waste to be disposed of.

Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Turkey.

The main problems in terms of data comparability relate to the coverage of waste from commerce and trade, and of separate waste collections carried out by private companies.

In some cases the reference year refers to the closest available year.

Data for New Zealand refer to the amount going to landfill only. Portugal includes Azores and Madeira Islands. Data for China do not cover waste produced in rural areas.

Sources

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Further information

Analytical publications

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- OECD (2004), *Addressing the Economics of Waste*, OECD Publishing.
- Strange, T. and A. Bayley (2008), *Sustainable Development: Linking Economy, Society, Environment*, OECD Insights, OECD Publishing.

Methodological publications

- OECD (2009), *Guidance Manual for the Control of Transboundary Movements of Recoverable Wastes*, OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2007), *Guidance Manual on Environmentally Sound Management of Waste*, OECD Publishing.

Websites

- Resource productivity and waste, www.oecd.org/env/waste.



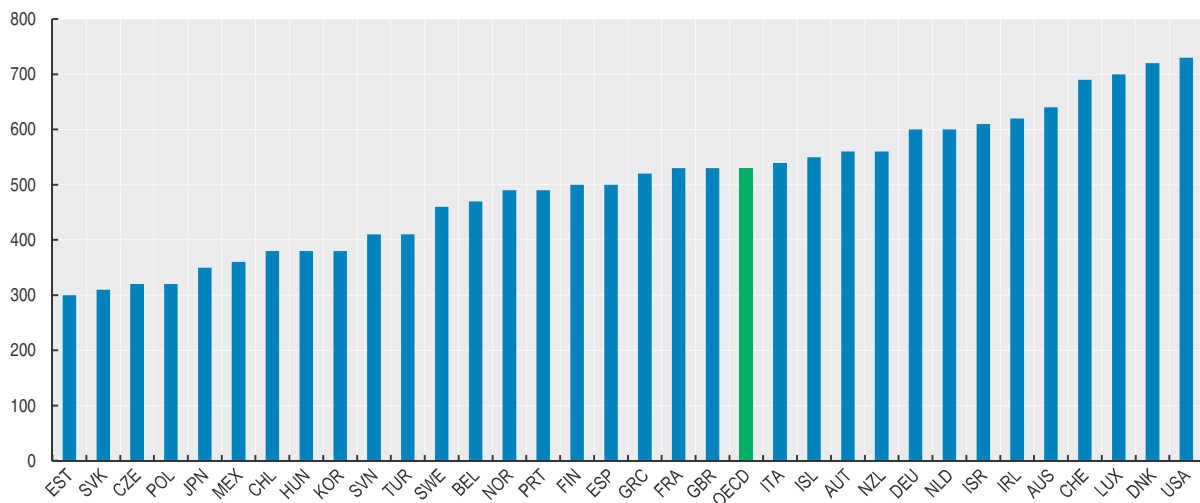
Municipal waste generation

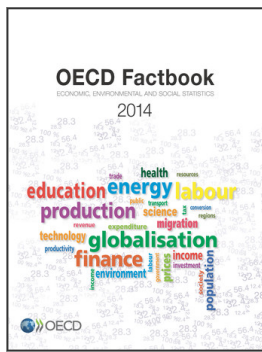
	Generation intensities kg per capita							Total amount generated Thousand tonnes
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2011 or latest available year	2011 or latest available year
Australia	680	..	690	..	690	..	640	14 035
Austria	..	..	420	430	530	570	560	4 678
Belgium	280	310	340	450	480	480	470	5 125
Canada	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Chile	200	230	250	280	330	350	380	6 517
Czech Republic	..	..	..	300	330	290	320	3 358
Denmark	400	480	..	520	610	660	720	4 001
Estonia	..	..	..	370	460	440	300	399
Finland	..	..	..	410	500	480	500	2 719
France	..	..	450	480	510	530	530	34 336
Germany	..	..	630	620	640	560	600	49 237
Greece	260	300	300	300	410	440	520	5 917
Hungary	..	..	530	460	450	460	380	3 809
Iceland	..	..	..	430	460	520	550	177
Ireland	190	310	..	510	600	730	620	2 846
Israel	..	..	..	..	630	590	610	4 759
Italy	250	270	350	450	510	540	540	32 479
Japan	380	350	410	420	430	410	350	45 359
Korea	..	510	710	390	360	370	380	18 581
Luxembourg	350	360	580	580	650	680	700	356
Mexico	..	..	250	330	310	340	360	41 063
Netherlands	490	480	500	550	610	620	600	9 947
New Zealand	650	..	990	870	770	780	560	2 461
Norway	550	590	550	640	620	430	490	2 392
Poland	280	300	290	290	320	320	320	12 129
Portugal	200	..	300	390	440	450	490	5 139
Slovak Republic	..	360	300	300	320	270	310	1 679
Slovenia	..	..	..	600	510	490	410	844
Spain	..	..	..	480	610	590	500	22 997
Sweden	300	320	370	400	430	480	460	4 374
Switzerland	440	530	610	600	660	660	690	5 478
Turkey	270	360	360	460	480	460	410	29 733
United Kingdom	..	..	470	500	580	590	530	32 450
United States	610	630	760	740	780	780	730	226 669
EU 28	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
OECD	..	..	500	520	560	560	530	661 458
Brazil	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
China	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	157 340
India	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Indonesia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Russian Federation	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	69 257
South Africa	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933028501>

Municipal waste generation

kg per capita, 2010 or latest available year

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933026088>



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