

Municipal waste

Efficient waste management plays an important role for public and environmental health. It prevents the formation of greenhouse gas emissions such as methane and other toxic gases that form through the degradation of organic waste in landfills, and particularly in warmer climates, effective waste management reduces the risk of spreading diseases. While inefficient waste management has negative impacts on landscapes and watercourses, other environmental concerns result from the fact that some disposal items are made from limited resources. Hence, re-using such items reduces the pressure on natural resources and increases resource efficiency. In addition, waste disposal has an important economic implication for local governments which are usually responsible for its management.

In 2010, OECD country municipal waste production varied from 300 kg per capita in Estonia to 750 kg per capita in the United States (Figure 5.20). At national level, per capita waste decreased in about half of the OECD countries between 1995 and 2010, particularly in Estonia, New Zealand, Norway and Slovenia. Despite the use of different methodologies in accounting for national waste, which could influence the comparison of national data, the strong decreases in some countries indicate overall improvements in waste management practices.

Large differences also exist in generated waste per capita within the same country (Figure 5.21). The largest regional differences are found in Sweden, where per capita waste disposal is as low as 18% of the national average in the region of Stockholm and as high as 250% of the national average in the region of Central Norrland.

Regional waste generation can be affected to some degree by the industrial production of consumer commodities that are consumed outside the region where the waste gets charged. However, effective waste management can have a positive impact on reducing the total amount of generated total waste, as shown for example in Germany where the waste produced in the region of Berlin was only 35.2% of the country's average value in 2010 (Figure 5.21).

Different municipal waste management practices, individual consumer behaviours, and different standards for the packaging of consumer commodities all influence variations in regional per capita waste values. Data on regional recycling rates supports this assumption. For the few countries where regional recycling rates are available, the large regional variations within a country can be explained by

different waste management practices and behaviour. In Sweden these values range from 15.3% to 83.6% of total waste recycled, while strikingly not less than 80% of total waste gets recycled in Austrian regions (Figure 5.22).

Definition

Municipal waste is generally defined as the total waste collected by or on behalf of municipalities. It includes waste from households, commerce, institutions and small businesses, and yard and garden. The definition excludes municipal waste from construction and demolition and municipal sewage.

Recycling rates are calculated as the percentage of municipal waste that undergoes material or other forms of recycling (including composting).

Source

National data: OECD Environmental Statistics (database), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/env-data-en>.

OECD (2013), OECD Regional Statistics (database), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-en>.

See Annex B for data sources and country-related meta-data. The sum of collected regional data on waste does not always match the OECD national data.

Reference years and territorial level

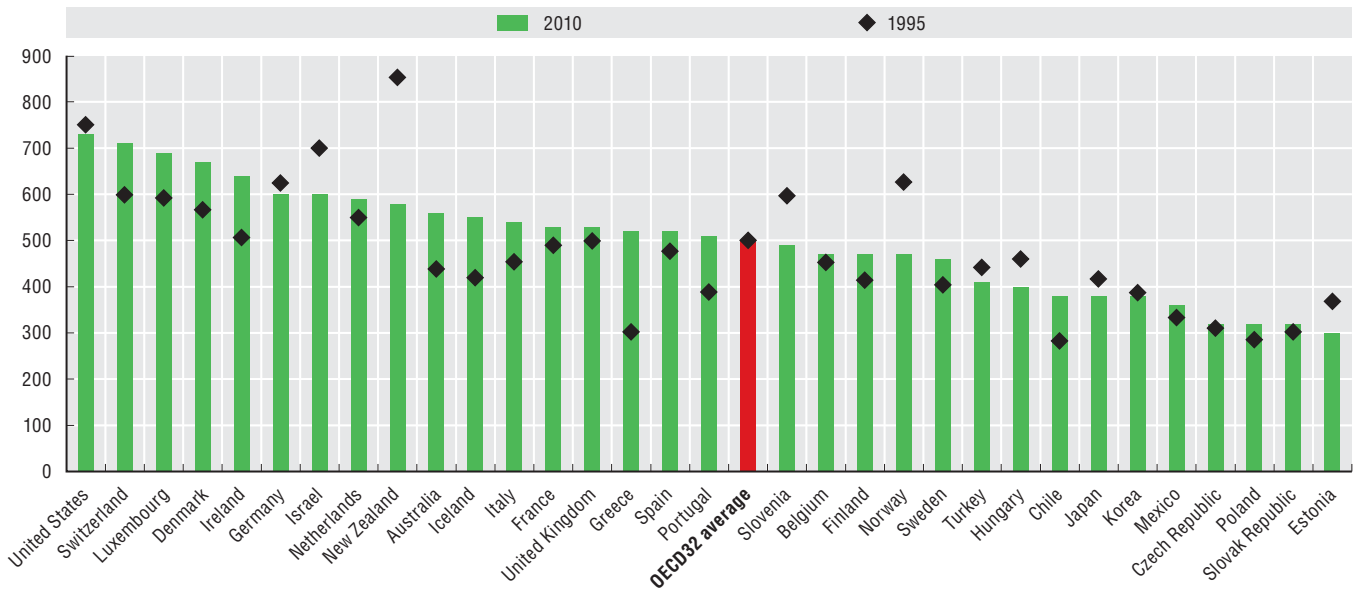
2010; TL2.

No regional data are available for Australia, Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Switzerland and United States.

Figure notes

5.21: Each observation (point) represents a TL2 region of the countries shown in the vertical axis. Regional values are expressed as a percentage of the country value.

5.20. Municipal waste (kg per capita), 1995 and 2010



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932915071>

5.21. Range in regional municipal waste per capita, TL2, 2010; country average value = 100

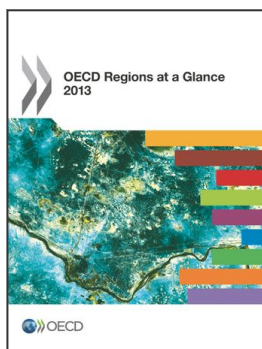


StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932915090>

5.22. Regional range in municipal waste recycled (including composting), TL2, 2010



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932915109>



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