

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 impact 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, yard and garden waste, street sweepings, the contents of litter containers, and market cleansing 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.

Overview

The quantity of municipal waste generated in the OECD area has risen strongly since 1980, and exceeded an estimated 650 million tonnes in 2007 (5560 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.

Comparability

The definition of municipal waste and the surveying methods used to collect information vary from country to country.

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

Data for Canada and New Zealand refer to household waste only. Data for China do not cover waste produced in rural areas.

Time series data for the OECD total exclude the Czech Republic, Hungary, Korea, Poland and the Slovak Republic. The per capita values for the latest year available cover all OECD countries and are partly based on OECD estimates. EU27 total refers to data provided by Eurostat.

Sources

- OECD (2008), *OECD Environmental Data Compendium 2006-2008*, updates from the 2008 OECD/Eurostat Questionnaire on the State of the Environment, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2006), *Environment at a Glance: OECD Environmental Indicators*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2008), *OECD Environmental Outlook to 2030*, OECD, Paris.

Further information

Analytical publications

- OECD (2004), *Addressing the Economics of Waste*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2004), *Economic Aspects of Extended Producer Responsibility*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2004), *Toward Waste Prevention Performance Indicators*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2008), *OECD Environmental Outlook to 2030*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2008), *OECD Insights: Sustainable Development: Linking Economy, Society, Environment*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2008), *OECD Sustainable Development Studies: Conducting Sustainability Assessments*, OECD, Paris.

Web sites

- OECD Environmental Indicators, www.oecd.org/env/indicators.
- OECD Waste Prevention and Management, www.oecd.org/waste.



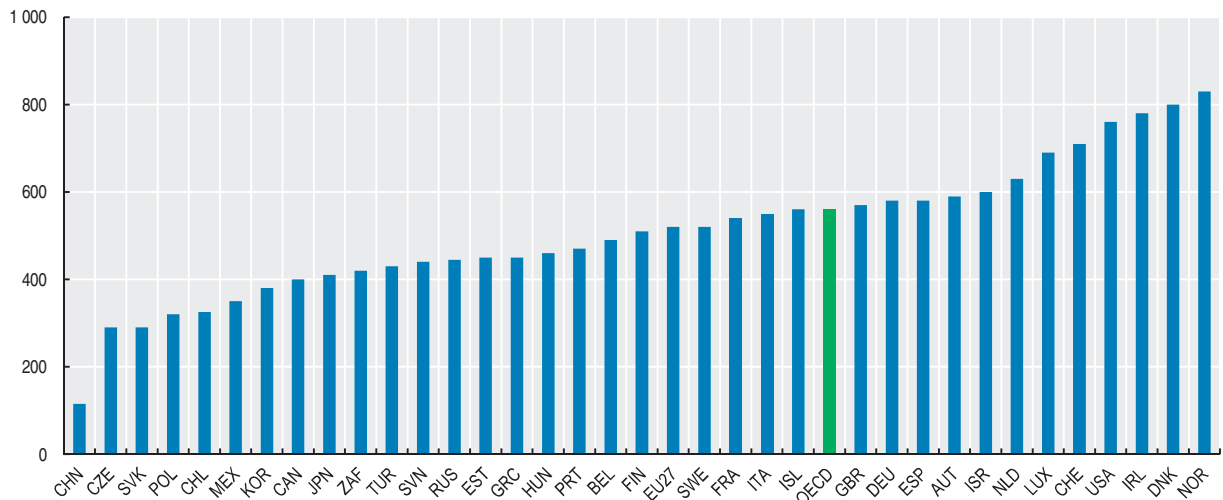
Municipal waste generation

	Total amount generated Thousand tonnes						Generation intensities kg/capita
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2007 or latest available year	2007 or latest available year
Australia	10 000	..	12 000	..	13 200	..	..
Austria	..	..	3 200	3 480	4 260	4 850	590
Belgium	2 760	3 055	3 440	4 585	4 860	5 210	490
Canada	..	..	8 925	7 030	11 280	12 980	400
Czech Republic	..	2 600	..	3 200	3 435	3 025	290
Denmark	2 045	2 430	..	2 960	3 545	4 365	800
Finland	..	..	..	2 110	2 600	2 675	510
France	..	..	26 220	28 250	31 230	34 310	540
Germany	..	..	49 860	50 895	52 810	47 890	580
Greece	2 500	3 000	3 000	3 200	4 450	5 000	450
Hungary	..	..	5 500	4 750	4 550	4 595	460
Iceland	..	..	..	115	130	175	560
Ireland	640	1 100	..	1 850	2 280	3 400	780
Italy	14 040	15 000	20 000	25 780	28 960	32 550	550
Japan	43 940	42 095	50 260	52 225	54 830	52 035	410
Korea	..	20 995	30 645	17 440	16 950	18 375	380
Luxembourg	130	130	225	240	285	330	690
Mexico	..	..	21 060	30 510	30 730	36 865	350
Netherlands	7 050	6 930	7 430	8 470	9 770	10 310	630
New Zealand	880	..	1 140	1 430	1 540	..	..
Norway	1 700	1 970	2 000	2 720	2 755	3 860	830
Poland	10 055	11 090	11 100	10 985	12 225	12 265	320
Portugal	1 980	2 350	3 000	3 855	4 530	5 005	470
Slovak Republic	..	1 900	1 600	1 620	1 710	1 580	290
Spain	..	..	..	18 730	24 730	26 154	580
Sweden	2 510	2 650	3 200	3 555	3 795	4 720	520
Switzerland	2 790	3 400	4 100	4 200	4 730	5 355	710
Turkey	12 000	18 000	22 315	27 235	30 620	30 000	430
United Kingdom	..	..	27 100	28 900	33 955	34 780	570
United States	137 570	149 190	186 170	193 870	216 865	230 555	760
EU27 total	..	..	..	226 530	252 480	258 200	520
OECD total	377 250	405 345	488 960	527 575	589 845	622 685	560
Brazil	..	..	..	..	58 000	..	..
Chile	..	..	..	..	4 680	5 330	325
China	..	..	67 670	106 710	118 190	154 145	115
Estonia	..	..	..	535	600	600	450
India	..	..	..	..	108 000	..	..
Israel	..	..	..	..	3 970	4 325	600
Russian Federation	22 000	24 800	28 000	50 000	51 850	63 075	445
Slovenia	..	..	..	1 190	1 020	885	440
South Africa	..	..	..	..	..	20 000	420

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/826022128246>

Municipal waste generation

kg per capita, 2007 or latest available year

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