

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, its management and treatment often absorbs more than one third of the public sector's financial efforts to abate and control pollution.

The main environmental concerns relate to the potential impact from inappropriate waste management on human health and the environment (soil and water contamination, air quality, land use and landscape).

Kilogrammes of municipal waste per capita – or “waste generation intensities” – are broad indicators of potential environmental pressure. They should be complemented with information on waste management practices and costs, and on consumption levels and patterns.

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 municipal construction and demolition waste.

Long-term trends

The quantity of municipal waste generated in the OECD area (thirty countries) has been rising since 1980 and exceeded 650 million tonnes in recent years (560 kg per capita). Generation intensity – i.e. kilogrammes per capita – has risen mostly in line with private final consumption expenditure and GDP, but there has been a slowdown in the rate of growth in recent years.

The amount of municipal waste also depends on national waste management practices. Only a few countries have succeeded in reducing the quantity of solid waste to be disposed of. In most countries for which data are available, increased affluence, associated with economic growth and changes in consumption patterns, tends to generate higher rates of waste per capita.

Comparability

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

The main problems 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.

OECD total does not include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Korea, Poland and the Slovak Republic. Per capita value covers all OECD countries.

Sources

- OECD (2005), *OECD Environmental Data Compendium 2004*, 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.

Websites

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

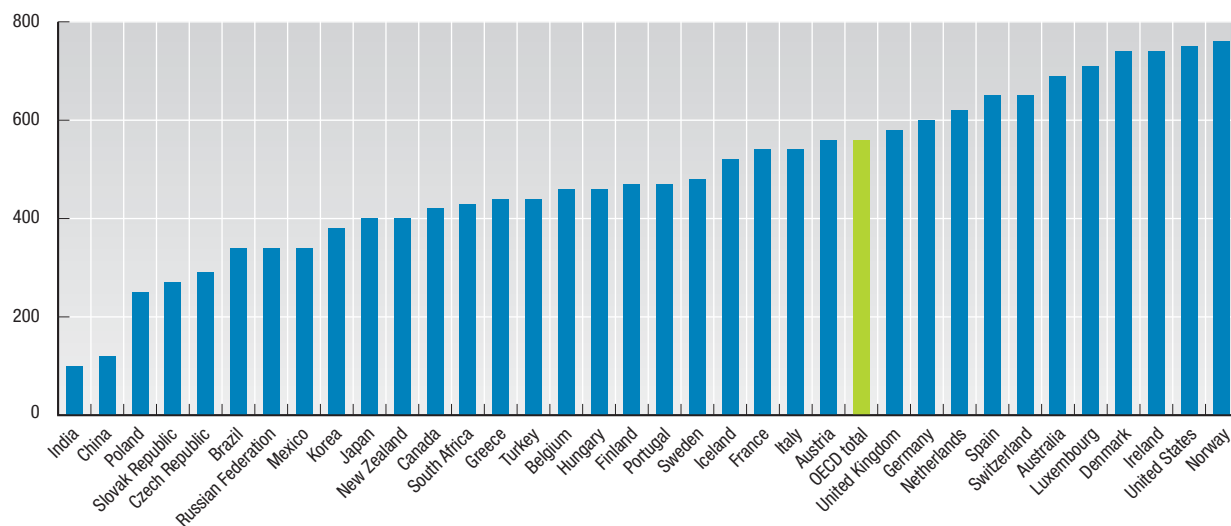
Municipal waste generation

	Total amount generated Thousand tonnes						Generation intensities kg/capita
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005 or latest available year	2005 or latest available year
Australia	10 000	..	12 000	..	13 200	13 200	690
Austria	..	..	3 204	3 476	4 250	4 588	560
Belgium	2 763	3 055	3 436	4 615	4 783	4 847	460
Canada	..	..	8 925	7 030	11 279	13 375	420
Czech Republic	..	2 600	..	3 200	3 434	2 954	290
Denmark	2 046	2 430	..	2 960	3 546	3 990	740
Finland	..	..	..	2 109	2 600	2 450	470
France	..	..	26 220	28 253	31 232	33 963	540
Germany	..	..	..	44 390	50 132	49 563	600
Greece	2 500	3 000	3 000	3 200	4 447	4 853	440
Hungary	..	..	5 500	4 752	4 552	4 632	460
Iceland	..	..	..	114	130	153	520
Ireland	640	1 100	..	1 848	2 279	3 050	740
Italy	14 041	15 000	20 000	25 780	28 959	31 677	540
Japan	43 995	43 450	50 441	50 694	52 362	51 607	400
Korea	..	20 994	30 646	17 438	16 950	18 252	380
Luxembourg	128	131	224	240	285	321	710
Mexico	..	..	21 062	30 510	30 733	36 088	340
Netherlands	7 050	6 933	7 430	8 469	9 769	10 178	620
New Zealand	880	..	1 140	1 431	1 541	1 541	400
Norway	1 700	1 968	2 000	2 722	2 755	3 498	760
Poland	10 055	11 087	11 098	10 985	12 226	9 354	250
Portugal	1 980	2 350	3 000	3 855	4 531	5 009	470
Slovak Republic	..	1 901	1 600	1 620	1 707	1 468	270
Spain	..	..	..	20 076	26 505	27 593	650
Sweden	2 510	2 650	3 200	3 555	3 796	4 347	480
Switzerland	2 790	3 398	4 101	4 200	4 728	4 855	650
Turkey	12 000	18 000	22 315	27 234	30 617	31 352	440
United Kingdom	..	..	27 100	28 900	33 954	35 077	580
United States	137 568	149 189	186 167	193 869	215 578	222 863	750
OECD total	367 000	397 000	479 000	526 000	586 000	614 000	560
Brazil	..	..	..	..	..	58 000	340
China	155 768	120
India	108 000	100
Russian Federation	50 000	340
South Africa	20 000	430

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Municipal waste generation

kg per capita, 2005 or latest available year

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