



EcoProfile of recycled PP pellets EU27+3, cradle-to-gate, post- consumer

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LCA method overview	
Background database	Ecoinvent v3.10
Dataset type	Cut-off, unit processes
Declared unit	'Production of 1 kg of mechanically recycled PP pellets'
ISO conformity	ISO 14040 and 14044 structure, internal review
LCIA method	Environmental Footprint 3.1
Software	openLCA 2.4
System boundary	Cradle-to-gate



1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The primary purpose of this document is to present an average life cycle inventory (LCI) and impact assessment (LCIA) for mechanically recycled polypropylene (rPP) pellets as result of the Horizon Project PRIMUS. The project seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of and data for the environmental impacts associated with mechanically recycled plastics.
- rPP is a widespread material known for its thermal and mechanical properties, commonly used in packaging, automobiles and consumer goods. The usage of mechanically recycled PP reduces the use of fossil fuels and energy compared to the production of primary PP.
- Mechanical recycling of WEEE plastics waste involves collection, sorting, shredding, sorting to remove non-plastics (via magnetic separation and eddy-current separation), grinding, cleaning, drying and extrusion to produce rPP pellets.
- The documentation of the method followed in the herein presented EcoProfile follows the main principles of the ISO 14040-14044 standards and was internally reviewed by PlasticRecyclersEurope and experts from the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland. It is intended for LCA practitioners and sustainability researchers and stakeholders in the field of plastic recyclates.
- Details for the methodology used for this EcoProfile can be found in the accompanying methodology publication. Datasets can be downloaded from openLCA Nexus in JSON-LD and ILCD formats.

2 MODEL DESCRIPTION

- This EcoProfile represents an average of European industry for mechanical rPP production. Data was collected from 9 sites in 2022 in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, represents the recycling of a mix of household, industrial and commercial wastes as well as ELV-WEEE wastes, and 5.58% of the European installed mechanical recycling capacity of those waste streams. The European coverage has been calculated per waste-stream, as displayed in Table 2 of the accompanying methodology document.
- The herein generated EcoProfile embodies a life cycle inventory in a 'cradle-to-gate' fashion for collection, sorting of waste, and production of PP plastic recyclate pellets. The product under investigation is 1 kg of recycled PP pellets. The main production steps in mechanical recycling are included in the system boundaries of the EcoProfile are visualised in Figure 1.

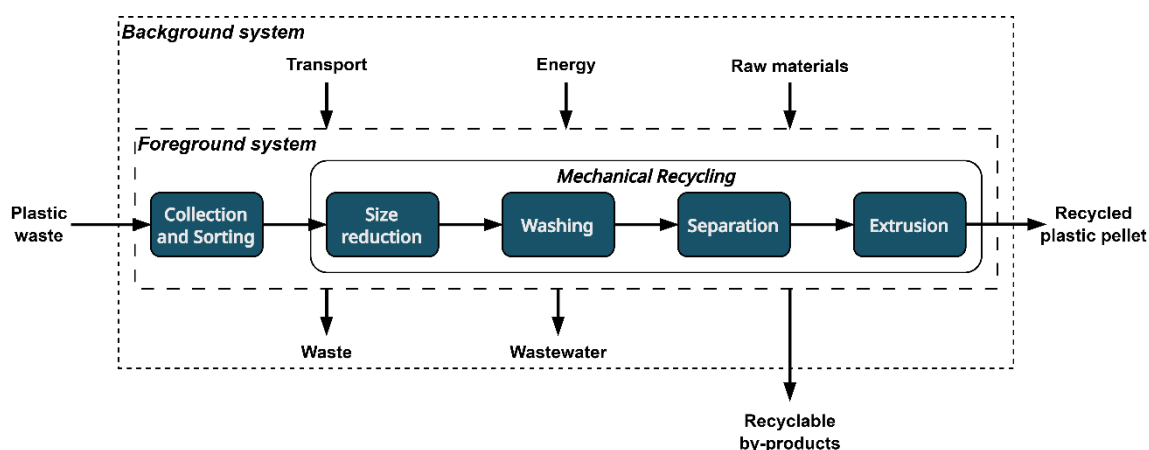


Figure 1: System description and boundaries. Following the PRE recycling scheme.

- The functional unit of the rPP EcoProfile is **'Production of 1 kg of mechanically recycled PP pellets, obtained from WEEE and household waste after collection and sorting, at gate, unpackaged, representing 5.58% of European production'** where the reference flow of the rPP EcoProfile provided is **'1 kg of rPP pellets, unpacked'**.
- Generally, a complete LCI was aimed for, though some neglectable amounts of secondary outputs had to be cut-off. For multi-output processes, physical allocation was used, as described in our methodology.
- The collected primary data was combined with secondary data (for transport, energy, chemicals, and water) from the ecoinvent 3.10 cut-off LCA database. The life cycle inventory and impacts were calculated using the CED and EF 3.1 method.

3 LCI RESULTS

Table 1. Summary of material and energy in- and outputs of an exemplary secondary material production process for recycled PP pellets with a cradle-to-gate boundary

Incoming Material	Flow Quantities per 1 kg of rPP
Mixed plastic waste including impurities ¹	1.69 kg
Material inputs	
air filter, central unit, 600 m3/h	1.46E-06 Item(s)
calcium carbonate, precipitated	6.12E-03 kg
chemical, organic	2.08E-02 kg
Cleaning consumables, with water	1.76E-05 kg
Colour masterbatch	4.06E-03 kg
containerboard, linerboard	3.10E-04 kg
fleece, polyethylene	8.45E-09 kg
lubricating oil	4.37E-05 kg
magnesium sulfate	4.30E-04 kg
polydimethylsiloxane	2.31E-05 kg
polyethylene, high density, granulate	2.80E-04 kg
polyethylene, low density, granulate	2.82E-02 kg
polypropylene, granulate	4.90E-04 kg
sodium chloride, powder	4.20E-04 kg
sodium hydroxide, without water, in 50% solution state	1.84E-05 kg
steel, low-alloyed	8.12E-03 kg
Talcum powder	7.04E-03 kg
tin plated chromium steel sheet, 2 mm	3.45E-05 m ²
waste collection lorry, 21 metric ton	5.94E-08 Item(s)
Service inputs	
drawing of pipe, steel	3.08E-05 kg
extrusion, plastic film	2.84E-02 kg
injection moulding	2.80E-04 kg
wire drawing, steel	8.09E-03 kg
Water consumption	
tap water	0.732 kg
Energy	
diesel, burned in building machine	0.197 MJ
electricity, low voltage	2.06 MJ
heat, central or small-scale, other than natural gas	4.61E-02 MJ
heat, district or industrial, natural gas	9.07E-02 MJ
petrol, unleaded, burned in machinery	9.90E-03 MJ
Infrastructure	
waste preparation facility	4.89E-09 Item(s)
Transportation	
municipal waste collection service by 21 metric ton lorry	4.87E-03 t*km
Transport, forklift, propane-driven	3.20E-04 t*km
transport, freight, lorry 16-32 metric ton, EURO3	2.28E-02 t*km
transport, freight, lorry 16-32 metric ton, EURO4	1.43E-02 t*km
transport, freight, lorry 16-32 metric ton, EURO5	0.156 t*km
transport, freight, lorry 16-32 metric ton, EURO6	2.69E-02 t*km
transport, freight, lorry, unspecified	3.52E-02 t*km
transport, passenger car	68.7 t*km
Solid Waste	
municipal solid waste	0.572 kg
raw sludge	7.80E-02 kg
waste mineral oil	2.68E-05 kg
waste plastic, mixture	2.36E-02 kg
Secondary material outputs	
Waste fraction - diverse - recycling cut-off	1.11E-03 kg

¹ This value expresses an aggregation of all polymer waste streams contributing to the EcoProfile inputs. Please find the disaggregated input values per-waste stream in the disaggregated datasets.

Waste fraction - metal - recycling cut-off	6.95E-03 kg
Wastewater treatment	
wastewater, average	5.30E-04 m ³
Probability to litter plastic	
plastic litter	1.29E-03 kg

Table 2. Primary energy demand by carrier using CED method for an exemplary secondary material production process for recycled PP pellets with a cradle-to-gate boundary

Energy carrier	Total energy input for 1kg of rPP pellets
Oil, crude	3.74 MJ-Eq
Gas, natural	3.12 MJ-Eq
Uranium	2.34 MJ-Eq
Coal, hard	1.58 MJ-Eq
Coal, brown	0.68 MJ-Eq
Energy resources: non-renewable	11.50 MJ-Eq
Energy resources: renewable	1.47 MJ-Eq
Total	12.97 MJ-Eq

4 LCIA RESULTS

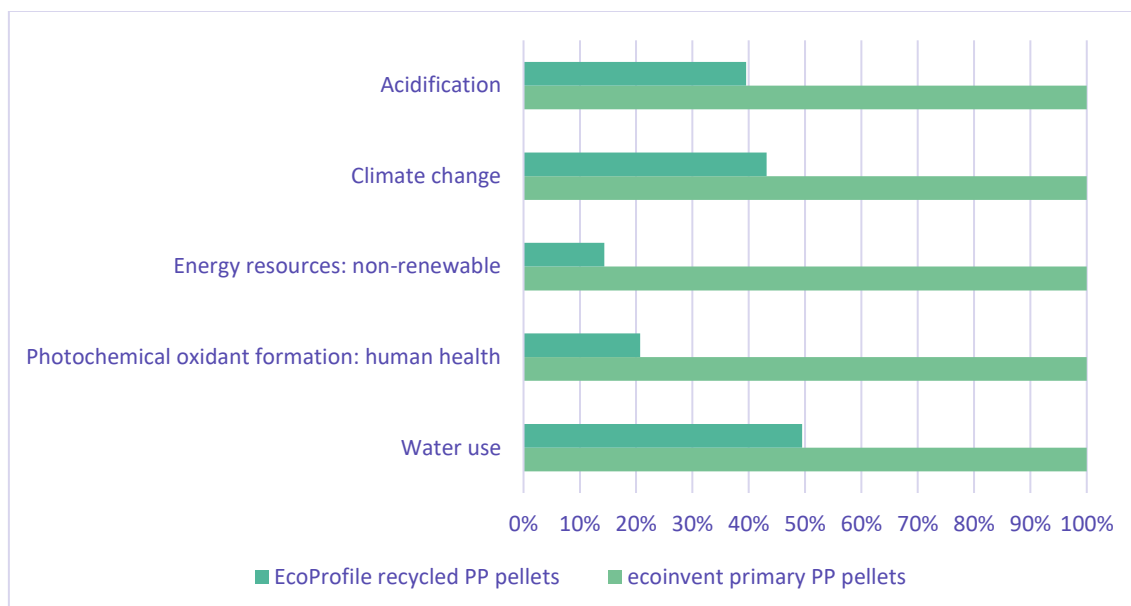


Figure 2. Comparison of primary² and secondary PP pellet production impacts for selected impact categories

Table 3. Life cycle impacts of the cradle-to-gate rPP model related to 1 kg of pellets

Impact Category	Impact assessment ³	Unit
Acidification	2.83E-03 ± 5.11E-04	mol H ⁺ -Eq
Climate change	1.02 ± 0.14	kg CO ₂ -Eq
Ecotoxicity: freshwater	7.05 ± 1.19	CTUe
Energy resources: non-renewable	10.9 ± 3.1	MJ, net calorific value
Eutrophication: freshwater	2.80E-04 ± 3.75E-05	kg P-Eq
Eutrophication: marine	1.01E-03 ± 1.17E-04	kg N-Eq
Eutrophication: terrestrial	6.69E-03 ± 1.14E-03	mol N-Eq
Human toxicity: carcinogenic	5.19E-09 ± 2.29E-09	CTUh
Human toxicity: non-carcinogenic	1.13E-08 ± 1.51E-09	CTUh
Ionising radiation: human health	0.134 ± 0.015	kBq U235-Eq
Land use	5.07 ± 1.90	dimensionless
Material resources: metals/minerals	5.56E-06 ± 1.29E-06	kg Sb-Eq
Ozone depletion	3.84E-08 ± 4.83E-09	kg CFC-11-Eq
Particulate matter formation	3.79E-08 ± 6.20E-09	disease incidence
Photochemical oxidant formation: human health	2.66E-03 ± 6.64E-04	kg NMVOC-Eq
Plastic litter	3.72E-02 ± 2.88E-03	kg
Water use	0.257 ± 0.049	m ³ world Eq deprived

² For this comparison, the ecoinvent v3.10 process "acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene copolymer production | acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene copolymer | Cutoff, U - RER" was used.

³ The uncertainty value presented here has been calculated on the foreground data. Details are described in the methodology.