Controlling plastic waste
Export of G7 countries' plastic waste overseas in 2017 and 2018

Since early 2018, China implemented restrictions on waste imports which effectively altered the geography of plastic scrap trade.

In 2018, approximately 10,000 containers of plastic scrap were shipped from France, the UK, Italy and Germany to Asia.

In 2018, 59,000 containers of plastic scrap were shipped from the United States and Europe to Asia.
The 15 largest importer countries of G7 plastic waste

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Imports 2008 (tonnes)</th>
<th>% of inadequately managed waste in 2018</th>
<th>% change from 2007 to 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>295,000</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>290,000</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>320,000</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>717,000</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>560,000</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>119,000</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>399,000</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>290,000</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>295,000</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>266,000</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>152,000</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>134,000</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>134,000</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* % of inadequately waste management refers to waste that is not formally managed and includes disposal (or burning) in dumps or open, uncontrolled landfills, where it is not fully contained. The figure is modeled for each country by Jambor & et al. (2015) using data on waste disposal methods, economic classification and geographic region (as defined by the World Bank).

G7 countries are the United States, Canada, Japan, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy.

In 2018, because of China’s significant decrease in imports of plastic scrap, other Asian countries drastically increased their imports, many of whom have inadequate waste management systems in place.

Impacts of plastic scrap transboundary movement

Plastic scraps are traded continuously between businesses across countries such as in the EU. This trade leads to GHG emissions in the air and escapes of macro and micro-plastics into the terrestrial and marine environments during transportation.
Impacts of plastic scrap transboundary movement

In 2018, Europe exported about 1.18 million tonnes of plastic scrap to Asian countries, worth more than 267 million euros.

The trade may move through different transit countries, where leakage of plastic is possible through dumping, landfill, or burning.
Impacts of plastic scrap transboundary movement

Since early 2018, China implemented restrictions on waste imports, which effectively shifted the geography of plastic scrap trade.

In 2018, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam became the largest importing countries of plastic scrap from developed countries in Europe and North America.

Legend:
- plastic waste producers
- leakage risk
  - lowest
  - highest
Impacts of plastic scrap transboundary movement

Approximately 5% to 30% of imported plastic scrap in emerging economies in the Global South has no market value and ends up in landfills, open dumps or is burnt.

The recycling of plastic scrap from developed countries in Asia is generally carried out by low-cost recycling facilities, often domestically, with inexperienced or poor-quality equipment.

plastic waste producers

leakage risk

- polluted soil
- polluted water
- soil and water pollution
- open air dumping
- toxic fumes
- GHG
- burned plastic waste

LOW-COST RECYCLING FACILITIES

CARGO SHIP

TRANSPORT ROUTE IN 2018

THAILAND

VIETNAM

MALAYSIA

GANGNEUNG

GHA

GHG

Toxic fumes

GHA

GHA

GHA

GHA

GHA
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